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Vertrauen in the Prose Works of Friedrich Dürrenmatt

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Vertrauen* in the Prose Works of Friedrich Dürrenmatt submitted by Susanne Garmsen in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date April 23rd 1982

Dedicatation

This thesis is dedicated to several people who are very important to me, without whose support, encouragement and help I could not have completed this thesis. Firstly, I wish to give my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Gerwin Marahrens, whose patience, personal interest and dedication was invaluable to me. Thanks are also due to the members of my committee, Dr. Raleigh Whitinger and Dr. Henry Kreisel, for their time spent and kind suggestions. I wish to express my most deep appreciation to my parents for believing in me and standing behind me all the way. Lastly, this thesis is also for Norman Godbout, an important part of my life during the most difficult times I had in trying to complete my degree.

Abstract

The theme of trust is a dominant topic in Friedrich Dürrenmatt's works, especially in his prose. Certain aspects of this concept have been examined in the secondary literature up until now, for example religion (manifesting trust in God and organized religion.) This has not done justice to the broad topic of trust, for it is only one kind of *Vertrauen*. The purpose of *Vertrauen* in different values, according to Dürrenmatt, is to ward off the absurd in life. However, although Dürrenmatt ascribes to the notion of life's absurdity and chaos, he is not a nihilist, for he believes in humanism. Various other values in which his characters demonstrate *Vertrauen* prove this. Despite the display of *Vertrauen* in detrimental values such as technology, materialism and power--detrimental because they do not aid man but leave him vulnerable to the forces of the absurd such as coincidental chance--that his characters as representatives of modern society exhibit, Dürrenmatt suggests confidently that *Vertrauen* in such values as freedom, morality and one's fate can lead to the realization of his ideal goal of humanism. Man is relatively helpless in the modern unordered, overpopulated and overmechanized world. The only option open to him for survival in the midst of his powerlessness is an accepting attitude, *Vertrauen* in the positive values mentioned above, and trust towards one another. For there is nothing left to lend man support in his struggle for survival but to trust in his own fate,

since he is helpless when confronted by it, and to adopt a position of morality towards his fellow man. Together, these ideas constitute a system of values which Dürrenmatt feels man should have *Vertrauen* in.

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I. Introduction

The topic of trust in the modern world is a very important one, because it is controversial. It rests on the basis of certain values which change with the times. As far as Dürrenmatt is concerned, much has been written about certain recurring themes in his works which involve trust, such as justice, religious faith, the grotesque and the absurd. Themes such as the above have been extensively dealt with, but what has not been examined at all is, firstly, the nature of and reasons for trust in these particular values existing; and, secondly, how Dürrenmatt criticizes man's modern values and advocates certain others based on an older accepted moral system, adapted to suit the modern world. These values which he advocates are, of course, based on his own particular *Weltanschauung*.

This thesis concentrates on the prose works of Dürrenmatt, namely *Die Stadt*, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, *Der Verdacht*, *Grieche sucht Griechin*, *Die Panne*, *Das Versprechen*, and *Im Coiffeurladen*. Certain relevant plays, radio plays and theoretical treatises will also be mentioned.[1] Dürrenmatt's works demonstrate chronologically how he occupies himself with the values he had learned to accept and trust when younger, and how he re-examines them and finds them lacking. He goes on to criticize severely the

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[1] The earliest of Dürrenmatt's prose works, the first one he ever wrote, entitled *Der Alte*, was not available to the author of this thesis; therefore this examination must take place without reference to it.

values in which modern society places its trust, demonstrating how detrimental these values actually are to man. Then he determines which values, according to him, one might best have trust in, in order to survive the modern, chaotic world. This thesis traces exactly this development of *Vertrauen* and values in Dürrenmatt's works. The purpose of *Vertrauen* will be determined; different kinds of trust will be examined, as well as today's accepted values; religious and secular beliefs of various characters in Dürrenmatt's works will be explored. Finally, the principles that Dürrenmatt advocates will be dealt with, the ones modern man should have trust in, given the nature of the twentieth-century world. Exactly in what way man's values have changed will also be looked at, with the help of the examples to be found in Dürrenmatt's works. In summation, this thesis will attempt to demonstrate Dürrenmatt's conception of the individual in an increasingly populous and anonymous society, and how *Vertrauen* in certain values can contribute toward his survival. In the measure that Dürrenmatt's works deal with values, at times old and unsuitable ones, at times modern and fashionable but morally wrong ones--this is the measure in which his works deal with *Vertrauen*, for the two are inseparable. This shows how fundamental this topic is in Dürrenmatt's works.

II. The Nature of *Vertrauen*

A. *Vertrauen*: Definition, Purpose, Essence

The first item to be clarified at the very beginning of this thesis is how the term *Vertrauen* is understood. The German term will be used often, as it includes many meanings which cannot adequately be translated by one single English equivalent such as trust, confidence or belief. The following are two definitions explaining the meaning of the term *Vertrauen*, which are important for the understanding of the viewpoint of this thesis. Under 'trauen' we find the following:

> gehört im Sinne von 'fest werden' zu der unter treu behandelten Wortgruppe. Aus dem urspr. Wortgebrauch im Sinne von 'glauben, hoffen [...]' entwickelte sich die Bed. 'Vertrauen schenken'.[2]

A second definition, focussing on a different aspect of the term, reads as follows:

> *Vertrauen* (intrans. verb) jmdm. * das *Vertrauen* zu jmdm. haben, dass er sich in bestimmter Weise verhält [...] . *Vertrauen*: Zuversicht, fester Glaube an jmds. Zuverlässigkeit, fester Glaube daran, dass jmd. sich in bestimmter Weise verhält.[3]

These two definitions demonstrate the two basic meanings of the term, namely *Vertrauen* in something (here: in different abstract or concrete values such as religion, God, oneself, technology, materialism, etc.) and *Vertrauen* in someone, in other words, *Vertrauen* in other people. Actually, the latter

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[2] *Etymologie*, vol. VII of *Der Grosse Duden* (Mannheim: Dudenverlag, 1963), p. 716.
[3] Wahrigs *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Gütersloh, Berlin, München, Wien: Bertelsmann Lexikon-Verlag, 1968 & 1975), col. 3982.

idea is contained within the first and is not separate, because the basis for trust in other people is shared belief in common values. The definition given in *Wahrig* states that *Vertrauen* indicates confidence that another will act in a particular way; the basis for one's actions are, for the most part, one's individual value systems and beliefs. Therefore, for the emotional relationship of *Vertrauen* in someone else to be established, most likely both persons share the same values and can thus rely on each other. Of course, they can also share the same values and for this very reason not trust each other, where the common values are competitive, such as striving for gain in power, money, etc. This is the case, for example, in the novels *Der Sturz* and *Die Panne*. The reason for the existence of this latter situation is simply because human relationships automatically suffer when material values are considered to possess greater worth than humanistic ones.

Dürrenmatt views the world and society as being unordered, chaotic, difficult to grasp and understand. *Vertrauen* in certain values and value systems can be of limited but tangible help towards survival in this world. The reasons for the world becoming chaotic in the modern age will be explored in the third chapter of this thesis. Briefly, the "Weltordnung, die verloren ist und bleibt,"[4] has disappeared because of the population explosion, the

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[4] Karl Guthke, *Geschichte und Poetik der deutschen Tragikomödie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1967), p. 379.

resulting increasingly complicated bureaucracy supposedly necessary to deal with humanity, and incredible technological advances, understood only by specialists, not by the common man. All these factors diminish man's control over the external world. Therefore:

> True order, and this is a recurring thesis of Dürrenmatt, lies in the human heart and mind, not in external realities, no matter how compelling these may seem to be.[5]

And this is exactly the purpose of *Vertrauen*, to provide "true order ... in the human heart and mind", since man cannot have that order today in his external world.

A belief should serve as an aid in surviving the world as it is; it should not serve to deny reality. Also, a belief which brings order to one's mind or to society must not be regarded as an end in itself; it must remain a means to survival, and not become entrenched in people's minds as an absolute. In such a situation, it moves away from being an ideal and ossifies into an ideology. Dürrenmatt correspondingly voices his reservation as far as the degree of *Vertrauen* in different social orders is concerned:

> Ich habe nichts gegen Gesellschaftsordnungen, die partiell vernünftig sind, ich weigere mich nur, sie heilig zu sprechen und den gewaltigen Rest ihrer Unvernunft und ihrer Tabus hinzunehmen.[6]

He cautions against blind trust and absolute acceptance of any value system, be it moral, social, political or

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[5] Murray Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 32.

[6] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Monstervortrag über Gerechtigkeit und Recht nebst einem helvetischen Zwischenspiel* (Zürich: Arche, 1969), pp. 100-101.

religious. In fact, in the same volume he even points out the obvious disadvantages of our self-imposed order, implemented by the trust in particular socially acceptable values:

> Gesellschaftsordnungen sind ungerechte und unfreie Ordnungen, die wir errichten müssen, um überhaupt Ordnungen zu haben, weil wir zu einer rein vernünftigen Politik durch die Widersprüchlichkeit der menschlichen Natur nicht fähig sind.'

But Dürrenmatt recognizes that man needs order because it is lacking in human nature, despite the disadvantages and dangers that imposed ordering structures, e.g., social order brought about by *Vertrauen* in particular common values, bring with them. Social values may often be more disadvantageous than beneficial, as one critic correctly points out with an example taken from the detective novel *Das Versprechen*:

> Der Kommandant der Zürcher Kantonspolizei, Dr. H., bemerkt einmal, Matthäi sei durch das 'allzu solide Gefüge' der Schweiz gefühllos geworden (22). [...] Die feste schweizerische Ordnung' wirkt irgendwie hemmend auf Matthäi, und nicht nur auf ihn, sondern auch auf Dr. H. selbst und darüber hinaus auf alle Bürger des Landes. Daher kann ein gewisser Widerstand gegen diese Ordnung nur von gutem sein.'

This point, namely Dürrenmatt's advice to accept social values only with reserve and not wholeheartedly, will be further illustrated later.

' Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 88.
' Ironically, the Swiss National Tourist Office proclaims Switzerland "a clean, decent and logical country, where everything works" in regular weekly magazine advertisements. (*Time*, 18 June 1979, p. 53)
' Peter Spycher, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Das erzählerische Werk* (Frauenfeld/Stuttgart: Huber, 1972), pp. 302-303.

To sum up briefly the purpose of *Vertrauen*: when one has trust in something, one accepts that idea or value as the basis for one's actions and can then act and accomplish things accordingly. *Vertrauen* thus supplies the ground rules for the actions of any individual or group. Lack of trust leads to insecurity (manifesting itself in its extreme form as fear) which results in actions being affected by, restricted by and determined by this insecurity-in other words, loss in freedom of action for the individual. It becomes evident from the above just how important the factor of *Vertrauen* is for all individuals and societies. Its importance will be demonstrated repeatedly throughout this thesis by its presence or absence in the characters of Dürrenmatt's works.

B. The Absurd

The element of the absurd is ever-present, be it more or less immediately obvious, in Dürrenmatt's works. This concept will be useful in further defining the theme of *Vertrauen*. Dürrenmatt's own particular idea of the absurd will be examined, that is, its paradoxical nature; then, this factor's negative effects on man will be presented; and following this it will be shown how this negativity can be overcome by man. It is important to note that Dürrenmatt's concept of the absurd, which actually consists of an affinity for the paradoxical, is not the same as that of the adherents to the so-called School of the Absurd, where the

term "absurd" is equated with "meaninglessness," i.e., life having no meaning or purpose. Dürrenmatt certainly believes that life at least has meaning, even if it **appears** meaningless and chaotic. For Dürrenmatt, the absurdity of life exists in the fact that no matter how intelligent and talented a person may be, no matter how clever and thorough his perception of possible pitfalls and plans for attaining a certain goal may be, no matter how firm his *Vertrauen* in a particular idea or method or philosophy or person may be, the element of chance may, and often does, render all his efforts absurd, i.e., meaningless and superficially futile, by destroying his achievements and causing his failure. It seems absurd that man, with his generous measure of intelligence and potential, can be cut down again and again by the capricious whim of chance. Dürrenmatt himself expresses this best in his oft-quoted but still elucidating "21 Punkte zu den Physikern":

> 8. Je planmässiger die Menschen vorgehen, desto wirksamer vermag sie der Zufall zu treffen.
> 9. Planmässig vorgehende Menschen wollen ein bestimmtes Ziel erreichen. Der Zufall trifft sie dann am schlimmsten, wenn sie durch ihn das Gegenteil ihres Zieles erreichen: das, was sie befürchteten, was sie zu vermeiden suchten [z.B. Ödipus.]
> 10. Eine solche Geschichte ist zwar grotesk, aber nicht absurd [sinnwidrig.]
> 11. Sie ist paradox.'[10]

Thus, through the author's own words, it becomes clear that he is not a writer of the School of the Absurd, but a

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[10] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Theater-Schriften und Reden* (Zürich: Arche, 1966), pp. 193-194.

portrayer of the paradox in life. Even though events are portrayed in Dürrenmatt's works which may appear absurd, he considers them not so much absurd as paradoxical'' :

> Im Gegensatz zum Absurden ist in der Paradoxie der Sinn, obwohl gebrochen, immer noch zu erkennen.''

For Dürrenmatt's writings have both meaning and purpose; he does have a message for his audience, which will be explored specifically in the final chapter of this thesis.

The paradoxical nature of the absurd lies in the fact that it both possesses and lacks meaning at the same time. Put simply, Dürrenmatt sees life for mankind as a whole as absurd, but feels that individuals can overcome this absurdity and bring meaning to their own lives. The paradox is that the individual may (and most likely will, according to Dürrenmatt) fail while attempting to reach his goal. But he overcomes the absurd and brings meaning to his life by virtue of the attempt itself. Armin Arnold describes his attitude concerning this topic:

> Im Grunde ist Dürrenmatt von der Absurdität der menschlichen Existenz überzeugt; die menschlichen Ideale (Gerechtigkeit, Liebe, Freiheit, etc.) stehen auf wackligen Füssen, und auch das nur solange, bis einer sie absichtlich oder zufällig anstösst. Ohnmächtig steht der einzelne Mensch dem Nichts gegenüber.''

'' A view corroborated by another critic: Dürrenmatt's "Begriff des Absurden sei ein ganz anderer als der der Existentialisten, indem ihm das Paradoxe mehr zusage als das rein Absurde." Spycher, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 278.

'' Karl Pestalozzi, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt," in *Deutsche Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, II, ed. Otto Mann (Bern: Franke Verlag, 1967), p. 400.

'' Armin Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1969), p. 92.

Another critic is of the opinion that the term 'absurd' does not apply to the world, but is rather "eine Charakterisierung menschlichen Handelns."[14] This is a relevant point regarding Dürrenmatt's writings, which increasingly depict the failure and impotence of human action: this is the illustration of the absurd in the sense of paradoxical. On the other hand, Dürrenmatt's unsuccessful characters demonstrate also:

> dass der Versuch, das Absolute zu erlangen, den Menschen nur lächerlich werden lässt, weisen darüber hinaus aber auch Möglichkeiten einer sinnvollen Existenz auf.[15]

This is where the possibility of gaining meaning in one's own life arises, even if one fails at something, as the attempt itself is what is meaningful. Of course, the motivating force to attempt anything in an absurd world is a belief in something which lends meaning to life.

Dürrenmatt relates a short hypothetical episode in which one has just successfully saved the life of a would-be suicide, who then, a short time later, nevertheless does succeed in killing himself:

> Unsere Rettungsaktion erweist sich nachträglich als sinnlos, und dennoch vermochten wir nicht anders zu handeln. Wir müssen an den Sinn des Rettens glauben, wollen wir überhaupt retten.[16]

This is the nucleus of Dürrenmatt's thought: one must

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[14] Robert E. Helbling, "Groteskes und Absurdes-- Paradoxie und Ideologie" in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Gerhard P. Knapp (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 249.
[15] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Figur des Narren bei Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (Bielefeld: Pfeffer, 1974), p. 51.
[16] Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 102.

believe in a sense of purpose, even if one fails, in order to act at all. This is a long-accepted principle in psychology, especially with the Behaviorist school. Thus *Vertrauen* in something is simultaneously meaningless and meaningful. But only with *Vertrauen* in something is it possible to act and thus achieve some meaning in one's life. Even if it superficially appears that one has failed, one has gained personally in any event by virtue of one's action.

Again, the core of Dürrenmatt's philosophy lies in his advice to act, in order to overcome the absurd:

> Nach Camus gibt die 'Auflehnung' gegen das Absurde 'dem Leben seinen Wert.'[17]

This is a very existentialist view. Taking dying for a cause as an example:

> Es offenbart die Tragik der Freiheit oder eine falsche Gesellschaftsordnung, im äusseren Sinne aber ist das Opfer vergeblich, weil es die richtige Gesellschaftsordnung nicht herbeiführt.'[18]

This statement certainly applies to Traps of *Die Panne* and Ill of *Der Besuch der alten Dame*, whose martyrs' deaths in the name of justice can be termed failures because they do not provide an example for or change their societies in any way. Yet personally each one's death has brought meaning to his own life because he took a positive step in accepting

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[17] Gerwin Marahrens, "Friedrich Dürrenmatts *Ehe des Herrn Mississippi*," in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Gerhard P. Knapp (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 122.

[18] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Mannheimer Schiller-Rede," *Akzente*, 7, No. 1, p. 20.

his guilt and atonement by death. This is the paradoxical nature of the absurd: to all observers an event may be meaningless, yet to one person meaning may exist.

Concerning the negative aspects of the absurd and its unfavorable effects on man, the predominant way in which it manifests itself, according to Dürrenmatt, is via the element of chance (*Zufall*). What Dürrenmatt intends with his portrayal of coincidence's far-reaching and destructive influence on man is to demonstrate the chaos in the world and the futility of man's attempts to gain or wield any control:

> Die Vorgänge, die Dürrenmatt darstellt, weisen mit eindeutiger Stringenz immer wieder auf das Fehlen eines Systems, auf die Widersinnigkeit jeden Kausalnexus hin.''

Chance uncovering the absurdity perpetually lurking below the surface of life is defined by one critic as follows:

> *Zufall* or *Das Nicht-Voraussehbare* occurs when a fixed set of beliefs clashes with a viewpoint that is different from the expected, or in other words when a preconceived plan collides with reality.[20]

This recalls the original definition of the term *Vertrauen* given at the beginning of this thesis, which had also pointed out this ingredient of expectation. Daviau stresses this aspect of man's plans often being overthrown and his ideas shown up as valueless by some small accident of fate.

'' Gerhard P. Knapp, "Wege und Umwege: ein Forschungsbericht," in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Gerhard P. Knapp (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 33.

[20] Donald G. Daviau, "The Role of Zufall in the writings of Friedrich Dürrenmatt," *Germanic Review*, 47-48 (1972-1973), p 286.

Thus, whenever chance strikes, the absurdity of life (equated with the powerlessness of man) is demonstrated time and time again. There are countless examples of this to be found in Dürrenmatt's writings, already well-documented and investigated in many papers.[2']

To quote just one, and perhaps the most striking example of *Zufall*'s spectacularly destructive influence on man, and demonstrating the futility of man trying to gain control over events is Matthäi's fate in *Das Versprechen*. The whole book depicts his attempts to find the murderer of a little girl in a Swiss village, and his dedication and the lengths to which he goes in order to apprehend this criminal. Finally, the perfect trap, which is very logically conceived and quite brilliant, is set up and Matthäi devotes his life to waiting for the trap to be sprung. However, he waits in vain for many years, gradually losing his mind as he is so fanatically bent on succeeding with his plan. Only much later does one learn that the murderer was on his way to getting caught in the trap when he was killed in a car accident, unknown to the authorities. Thus mere chance destroys a man's life; a brilliant, perfect plan is rendered absurd by a coincidental auto accident. Matthäi's entire plan was thought through and constructed by logic, in which

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[2'] To cite just two examples: Donald G. Daviau's "The Role of Zufall in the Writings of Friedrich Dürrenmatt," *Germanic Review*, 47-48 (1972-3), 281-293 and Ulrich Profitlich's "Der Zufall in den Komödien und Detektivromanen Friedrich Dürrenmatts," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 90 (1971), 258-280.

he placed his complete trust. Dürrenmatt's use of coincidence as a literary device has a specific purpose in every single case:

> Through his use of *Zufall* Dürrenmatt tests contemporary man's sublime faith in logic and rationalism by exploring and exploding some of the assumptions on which modern life is based.[22]

Because coincidence is the agent of the absurd, its nature is also paradoxical. One can have the firmest *Vertrauen* in something and act accordingly, but this trust will be exploded, to borrow Daviau's terms, the moment *Zufall* sets in:

> Gerade das menschliche Streben, eine Welt der Ordnung aufzubauen, wird durch das Hereinbrechen eines Sinnwidrigen immer wieder zunichte gemacht.[23]

This is one of the negative effects of coincidence and the absurd on man. Yet the effects of a total lack of any *Vertrauen* in man are just as devastating, as will be shown below. Therefore, although man's faith will be shaken or even destroyed by the absurdity of life, he must still try to maintain it or perish.

Dürrenmatt portrays several characters who are totally lacking in any *Vertrauen* in values which would provide meaning to their lives. Of course, if one has no values, nothing to live by or strive for, life will have no meaning or hope for the future. A corollary to that is that if one

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[22] Donald G. Daviau, "The Role of Zufall," p. 287. [The American short story writer O. Henry also used the element of chance with exactly the same purpose, always ending his stories with a characteristic surprise twist of fate (cf. "The Gift of the Magi", etc.).]

[23] Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 14.

has no positive values, all one will have left over is the negative aspect of life. This is exemplified by the character of Rotmantel in the short story "Bild des Sisyphos" in the volume entitled *Die Stadt*. He is one

> der, ob er es weiss oder nicht, darunter leidet, dass ihm ein religiöser Glaube fehlt, ein Existentialist, der nicht nur an die Sinnlosigkeit der Welt und an die 'Geworfenheit' der Menschen glaubt, sondern auch an die Höllenhaftigkeit der Welt und an die Schlechtigkeit und die Verdamnis der Menschen.[24]

His goal and sole purpose in life, as depicted in the story, is to create something out of nothing, namely to gain a lot of money from a reproduction done by him of a famous painting (Hieronymus Bosch's "Sisyphos") which he tries to sell as the original and then buy back. He fails in his attempt and learns a basic law of physics: namely that one cannot create something out of nothing, usually stated as 'matter cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be transformed.' Rotmantel believes in nothing; therefore how can he accomplish anything with such a non-belief? One critic explains:

> Nihilism is no effective answer to the world, for nihilism has no values with which man can orient himself.[25]

An interesting possibility regarding Traps' suicide in *Die Panne* also concerns the devastating effect of values totally lacking in man's life:

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[24] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 61.
[25] Edith Mary Melton, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Die Stadt: Analysis and Significance of Dürrenmatt's Early Prose*, Diss. University of Louisiana 1972, p. 56.

> If a life of outward success in this society is suddenly revealed as meaningless and unacceptable there can be no solution. The breakdown is inevitable and final.[24]

According to this point of view, Traps did not commit suicide as a logical act in accordance with the new system of values which he has adopted, convinced by the old judges and ready to atone for his sin of murder; rather he commits suicide because he suddenly realizes he has been living for nothing of value. He had no moral scruples as far as business deals were concerned, no religious beliefs, no sense of the aesthetic as his schooling is lacking somewhat, etc. His only values in which he had *Vertrauen* were material ones, i.e., in social and business advancement, in his possessions such as his shiny red Studebaker, and so on. Therefore when his meagre values collide with the great system of absolute justice, whose proponents are the old judges, he sees how meaningless his life has been and as a consequence ends it, as certain critics like Kirchberger state. This story is the portrayal of a man who finally realizes how petty and worthless the values in which he (and society) have *Vertrauen* really are.

The starkest and bleakest portrait of lack of *Vertrauen* in values, which transforms existence into living out life's meaninglessness, is surely Dürrenmatt's first published short story *Weihnacht*. As far as literary technique is concerned, the story will be examined under this aspect in

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[24] Lida Kirchberger, "*Kleider machen Leute* and Dürrenmatt's *Die Panne*," *Monatshefte*, 52 (1960), p. 8.

the last chapter of this thesis. But the significance of the story stands solitarily and plainly: hopelessness as a result of disillusionment concerning certain values. From the description of the surroundings, one sees that everything is cold and dead. There is nothing left, nothing warm and comforting and supportive in which one could have *Vertrauen*. It is Christmas time, the raison d'être of which is the birth of the Christchild, symbol of hope and man's trust in and communion with God; but the figure of the Christchild is destroyed by the narrator and is now only "altes Brot [...] Altes Marzipan."[27] The narrator eating the marzipan figure of Christ obviously corresponds to the taking in of the Host at mass; however here this symbol of man's potential salvation is reduced to the level of something old and tasteless and completely unappealing. This value, namely God's help, has lost its appeal for man; God is dead:

> What concerns the author most is not God's death but rather the effect of God's death on man and his world. The narrator walks aimlessly and nihilistically in a world spotted with objects and elements, but in a world nevertheless, which is essentially empty because the narrator cannot relate to or perceive it as a unified totality. The binding warmth of God and God's love has been removed. [...] It is evident that the spiritually hungry traveller of this story [...] is a representative of the lost modern generation.[28]

Of course, this is a strictly Christian interpretation of

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[27] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Weihnacht*, in *Die Stadt* (Zürich: Arche, 1952), p. 11.
[28] E. Diller, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt's 'Weihnachten': a Short, Short Revealing Story," *Studies in Short Fiction*, 3 (1965-6), p. 139.

Dürrenmatt, which is too one-sided. However, this critic's view is still perfectly valid when generalized. If one simply substitutes the idea of "God's love" with the idea of *Vertrauen* in any system of values, which bring order to one's life and one's perception of it, this analysis of this story is perfectly viable. This critic describes what happens to man without a faith in something, as symbolically portrayed in Dürrenmatt's story. The important issue is:

> the question of whether and how man can live without the power of faith which, whether provable or not, gives man a confident order in the place of things. [...] Man is damned to the dilemma of a life without faith. He must wander aimlessly in a world of frozen emotions finding occasionally the rejected symbols of dead faiths, finding them, and having tried them, rejecting them.[29]

Again, faith must be understood not merely as religious faith, but as any kind of *Vertrauen* in whatever values bring meaning to one's life: without it life is meaningless and absurd.

Dürrenmatt advises his readers that despite the overwhelming dominance of life's absurdity, we need not and should not despair. It is important,

> nicht gleich zu verzweifeln, auch wenn der bare Unsinn kaum zu leugnen ist, der überall zum Vorschein kommt.[30]

He claims we have the choice to either despair or keep on fighting the absurd; one choice is as logical as the other, so one may as well choose the latter course instead of

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[29] E. Diller, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt's 'Weihnachten'," pp. 139-140.
[30] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Die Panne* (Zürich: Arche, 1956), p. 58.

emotional helplessness and unhappiness:

> Gewiss, wer das Sinnlose, das Hoffnungslose dieser Welt sieht, kann verzweifeln, doch ist diese Verzweiflung nicht eine Folge dieser Welt, sondern eine Antwort, die [man] auf diese Welt gibt, und eine andere Antwort wäre sein Nichtverzweifeln, sein Entschluss etwa, die Welt zu bestehen.[31]

As has already been demonstrated, it is no nihilism which Dürrenmatt portrays:

> In der tragikomisch gewordenen Freiheit bei Dürrenmatt steckt noch als Gegenbild die wahre Freiheit, in der tragikomisch verzerrten Gerechtigkeit noch die wahre Gerechtigkeit, in der Verzweiflung noch die Geste der Hoffnung, sei sie auch noch so schwach, und in der **Gestaltung** des Absurden noch die Herausforderung, Gestalt zu schaffen im Gestaltlosen, Gesicht im Gesichtlosen, Welt im Chaos.[32]

Thus it is evident that Dürrenmatt is questioning these values, but they nevertheless still form the basis for his writings.

One event prominent in Dürrenmatt's whole work which concretizes his idea of choosing either the pessimistic (despairing) viewpoint or the optimistic (*engagement*) line is the moment of death. This issue, as represented by Dürrenmatt, also corresponds closely with the stance taken by the French Existentialists. This is the ultimate test of a belief--is one willing to give up one's life for its sake?--and the moment of truth for man. For if one really has sincere firm *Vertrauen* in something, one will preserve

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[31] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Theater-Schriften und Reden* (Zürich: Arche, 1966), p. 123.
[32] Karl Guthke, *Geschichte und Poetik der deutschen Tragikomödie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), p. 390.[emphasis added]

that faith even in the face of death. During the course of the evening, Traps has grown to have such *Vertrauen* in the whole legal system and constellation of justice, sin and atonement which includes himself, that, in keeping with these values, he voluntarily punishes himself by death. Bärlach in the novel *Der Verdacht* is on his deathbed, yet he keeps defending the principles in which he has *Vertrauen*, exposing himself to extreme risks as he delivers himself into the hands of Emmenberger, the Nazi concentration camp doctor, who is still operating, so to speak, in his Swiss sanatorium. In Ill's case, which is very similar to Trap's, he also finally adopts the higher values of justice and atonement for sin over the empty, purely materialistic society of his home town Güllen, and is willing to accept death as punishment for his transgression of twenty-odd years ago. His newly-gained *Vertrauen* in these higher values supercedes his old values, and the test of death affirms his new belief.

These cases demonstrate the literary function Dürrenmatt has bestowed on death: namely to act as a test of *Vertrauen*. When confronted with this final traumatic event, one will either stand fast in one's *Vertrauen* or discard it; this is the decision one must make in regard to one's beliefs in the face of death. In view of today's unordered, uncohesive world and society:

> Dürrenmatt's problem was to find a sphere or dimension in which some aspect of moral decision-making is still valid and convincing. Nothing can be more intimate and convincing than one's own death. [...] Dürrenmatt considers man to be responsible not only for his life but also for his death.[33]

This is because death is part of life. Therefore, one must make decisions regarding it just as one must for the whole of one's life. This is why death becomes a test for *Vertrauen* in values. If one upholds higher values in the face of this ordeal, one gives one's death and life meaning. (Dürrenmatt's philosophy studies at university were quite obviously influenced by Kierkegaard.)

However, because of the very nature of today's world, it is even more difficult to achieve anything with one's death; for man is relatively powerless in the face of increasingly complicated and pervasive technology and overpopulation, with all their resulting far-reaching effects. Anonymous death is the rule of today; in the tangled modern society "spiegelt die Absurdität des Sterbens nur mehr das Absurde des ganzen Lebens wieder."[34]

Assertion of values at the time of death is thus extremely important in attempting to combat life's absurdity. All that is actually left to man in this world where death can arbitrarily strike anybody, anywhere,

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[33] Murray Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (New York: Twayne, 1969), pp. 84-85.

[34] Renate Usmiani, "Die Hörspiele Friedrich Dürrenmatts: unerkannte Meisterwerke," in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Gerhard P. Knapp, (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 134.

("hinter Kulissen droht im Alltag der schwarze Tod")[35] is a meek acceptance of his fate, giving himself up to his death instead of vainly trying to fight or escape it: mortals will always lose the fight against death. Thus one can conquer death only in a qualified way by accepting it, even if it is unjust--in this is the "Ohnmacht der Ungerechten"[36] manifest, because one refuses to engage in the futile struggle and supply the justified resistance to one's unjust and always unwelcome death: one would lose in the end anyway. If the hour of one's demise has arrived, one should have the *Vertrauen* in fate that things cannot be changed and one should accept the situation gracefully; at the same time one can and should affirm important values with one's death. This illustrates the thematic connection between death and the absurd in Dürrenmatt's works.

If one recognizes the absurdity and paradox of life but chooses to try to overcome it, does not, as shown above, despair and lack *Vertrauen* in anything, but rather decides to go in a positive direction as Dürrenmatt suggests[37], there are ways of going about doing this. Two possibilities are *Vertrauen* in ideals and in love. *Stranitzky und der Nationalheld* provides a good example of the extent to which *Vertrauen* in ideals can be helpful in overcoming the

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[35] Hans Bänzinger, "Die Gerichte und das Gericht von Alfredo Traps in einer ländlichen Villa," in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Gerhard P. Knapp, (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 230.
[36] Usmiani, "Die Hörspiele," p. 134.
[37] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Theater-Schriften und Reden*, p. 123.

hopelessness and despair of life. Stranitzky is a crippled former soccer player who, like Archilochos in *Grieche sucht Griechin*, tries to idealize the whole world. The sole reason for his ideals, as he expresses it after being completely disillusioned by the national hero whom he also idolizes, is shown by his words:

> O wilde goldne Hoffnung,
> Wie liebte ich doch dich.[38]

He does not despair because his ideals are what keep him going. *Vertrauen* in ideals gives people the strength to survive in an absurd world. Unfortunately, when the props of Stranitzky's ideals are taken from him, when he is dis-illusioned and brought face-to-face with the realities of life, he can no longer survive: he commits suicide. Archilochos is similarly divested of his idealistic illusions and has his eyes opened to the realities of life; however he does not commit suicide. This hero learns to live with life the way it is, accepting its conditions in this tale written three years after *Stranitzky und der Nationalheld*. Archilochos learns to have *Vertrauen* in clear-sighted (meaning not blind but tolerant) love in order to counteract life's absurdity:

> Solche Liebe muss immer wieder erobert werden. Der Mensch kann ihrer nie sicher sein. Hat er sie aber gefunden, so schenkt sie seinem Dasein einen neuen Sinn.[39]

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[38] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Stranitzky und der Nationalheld* (Zürich: Arche, 1959), p. 46.
[39] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren bei Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (Bielefeld: Pfeffer, 1974) p. 48.

Love is also the value which saves Übelohe in *Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi* from total emotional annihilation at the end of the play, after Anastasia, the heartless whore for whose sake he has suffered extreme hardship for years, subjects him to the final rejection and dies; all that remains is his love:

> Übelohe behält also angeblich seine Liebe, aber da sie ihn nicht zu Anastasia geführt hat und da er damit auch den Glauben an den Menschen verloren hat, ist diese Liebe zu einer leeren Idee geworden; sie ist nicht mehr fähig, eine zwischenmenschliche Beziehung herzustellen und dient lediglich noch dazu, den Grafen vor der völligen Zerstörung zu retten, indem er noch an diese Liebe glaubt und dadurch Trost findet.[40]

Here one of love's purposes is emphasized: not its pair-bonding powers, but rather its usefulness in diminishing the absurdity in life. The fatherly advice Romulus gives his daughter in the play *Romulus der Grosse* is also to try to make her love for her fiancé work; he points out

> dass die Liebe im personalen Bereich wichtiger und schwieriger sei als die Liebe zur anonymen Gesellschaft.[41]

This is because love to another individual demands courage and steadfastness, tolerance and acceptance. However, if one succeeds in this endeavor, one has certainly effected an accomplishment and given one's life meaning: one has conquered the absurdity in life.

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[40] Charles Jauslin, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Zur Struktur seiner Dramen* (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1964), p. 67.
[41] Hans Jürgen Syberberg, *Interpretationen zum Drama Friedrich Dürrenmatts* (München: UNI-Druck, 1965), p. 77.

III. Types of *Vertrauen*

It would be useful to be more specific in discussing the nature of *Vertrauen* itself under two different aspects: one is what one automatically thinks of when speaking of trust, namely trust in other people. Is it still feasible to trust others nowadays in an anonymous society and world? Professional trust is another significant area to be explored, as it differs from trust between two equals. On what is trust between people based, and why and how is it abused? What is the result when *Vertrauen* is lacking between people? Another type of trust peculiar to Dürrenmatt's writings which is encountered often, dealing with the quality of the *Vertrauen* and not with its object, is blind faith or trust. This is a very important topic. Exactly what it is comprised of, examples of it and its aims and effects will all be discussed in this chapter.

A. *Vertrauen* in Other People

Some reasons for the existence of *Vertrauen* between people will be touched upon here to determine what mutual trust is based on. One can generally say that two people will trust each other if they believe in the same values. As an example, in the novel *Grieche sucht Griechin* Archilochos, living in a foreign country and desiring a mate, advertises in the paper specifically for a Greek lady. The assumption is that, having the same homeland, she will understand him and get along well with him due to the fact that they will

presumably share the same values, namely those of their Greek home. Ironically, the exact opposite turns out to be the case. Chloé certainly cannot fit into Archilochos' rigid moral world order, being a prostitute.

The same principle is visible in *Stranitzky und der Nationalheld*, where Stranitzky firmly believes that the well-to-do, pampered national hero, Baldur von Moeve, will understand and be able to empathise with the lowly, poverty-stricken former soccer player, because the national hero has recently been stricken with a leprous toe, which puts him in the same league as the crippled Stranitzky. At least, this is what Stranitzky naively believes, until his rude awakening. In both cases, the critical issue is that Dürrenmatt is ironically portraying assumed trust based on assumed commonly-held beliefs.

A case where this is what happens though is in *Der Richter und sein Henker*. Bärlach and Gastmann are bound together by their shared life philosophy and the bet they made:

> There is a strange alliance between Bärlach and Gastmann, the judge and the condemned. [...] Not only do they share a considerable part of their past (as Saint-Claude and Mississippi do), there are even suggestions of a Jekyll-and-Hyde theme, figuring also in Dürrenmatt's early story *Der Folterknecht*. This theme is touched when Bärlach looks at the dead body of Gastmann, knowing well that his life, too, is played out.[42]

These two men continue in their own private game outside the law, having a definite *Vertrauen* in each other in knowing

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[42] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 133.

that they abide by the same rules, determined by themselves by a bet decades ago.

This kind of *Vertrauen*, based on playing the games and abiding by the rules, is very common in Dürrenmatt's works. It is to be seen in the early story *Das Bild des Sisyphos* in *Die Stadt*, where Rotmantel and the banker, who both desire intensely to possess this particular painting of Sisyphos, engage in a financial struggle to win it. Neither of them decides suddenly to try a different approach or method, such as stealing the painting or killing the opponent. They both hold to the tacit agreement to wrestle for possession of the picture in the manner they have decided: in this way they have *Vertrauen* in each other. The whole affair is compared to a game of chess (a favorite metaphor or symbol of Dürrenmatt's):

> Doch hatte der Rotmantel den Vorteil des ersten Zuges, der unter solchen Konstellationen oft entscheidend zu sein pflegt.[43]

Just a short while later, the metaphor is used again:

> Denn der 'Rotmantel' ging wie jene Schachspieler vor, welche die grössten Verluste nicht scheuen....[44]

These examples are only the beginning of Dürrenmatt's extensive use of this imagery. It is employed again in *Der Richter und sein Henker*; the author is playing the game with himself when Bärlach and Tschanz arrive to visit him. In addition, in the dénouement scene, as Bärlach explains to

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[43] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Bild des Sisyphos," in *Die Stadt* (Zürich: Arche), 1952, p. 48.
[44] Ibid., p. 49.

Tschanz how he figured everything out:

> Tschanz hörte dem unerbittlichen Schachspieler zu, der ihn matt gesetzt hatte.[45]

Concerning the same motiv, Spycher criticizes the final scene between Bärlach and Emmenberger in *Der Verdacht* as follows:

> Es ist eine der Lieblingskonstellationen Dürrenmatts: zwei 'Schachspieler, die an einem Brett sitzen'.[46]

"An einem Brett sitzen" signifies, of course, that although the two men are adversaries, they do trust each other in one respect, because they are sharing the same battleground and rules. This is the irony of enemies trusting each other when confronting each other.

One interesting case of *Vertrauen* between people, again apparently based on the same values, but which turns out to be a rather shaky trust, occurs in *Die Stadt* in the tale of the same name. The new 'guard,' sent down to settle in the hallways of the prison and presumably guard the prisoners, does not dare to go back up and clarify the ambiguous situation with his employers, because he assumes they have entrusted him with an important task which it is his duty to fulfill unquestioningly:

> Er hält also die Beziehung zwischen sich und der Verwaltung für eine des gegenseitigen <u>*Vertrauens*</u>. Indessen beweist sein Spekulieren, da es ihm, ob zu unrecht oder zu recht, am Vertrauen mangelt.[47]

The reason why the guard considers his relationship with his

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[45] Dürrenmatt, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 140.
[46] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 191.
[47] Ibid., p. 97. [author's emphasis].

employers, almost non-existent at any rate, as one of mutual trust is because this would mean he is part of the superior administration or management, sharing their values and for this reason sharing their *Vertrauen*. If this were not the case, it would mean that the 'guard' is a prisoner (the situation is unclear). He would rather remain uncertain and assume that he and his employers trust each other than risk finding out for sure, to discover perhaps that he is actually a prisoner. This case again demonstrates that the foundation for *Vertrauen* between people is commonly-held values. This enables people who are skilled at setting up a front for themselves to win other people's trust, by pretending to be as their fellow men are.

Gastmann is an example of this. Although the reader and Bärlach know what a master criminal he is, nevertheless he is not only accepted by the society of that area of Switzerland but (in a biting Dürrenmattian critique of Swiss values) is welcomed with open arms on account of his riches and prestigious, though fictitious, background:

> 'Er nicht Geld verdienen, er Geld haben. Er zahlen Steuern für das ganze Dorf Lamboing. Das genügt für uns, da Gastmann ist der sympatischste Mensch im ganzen Kanton,'[**]

as one villager, whose native tongue is definitely not German, quips. Gastmann travels in higher circles with ease, as is obvious in the scene of the party attended by the cream of that area's high society. He has mighty people like

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[**] Dürrenmatt, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 47.

the head of the representative assembly, von Schwendi, speak up for him, and can hide behind this cloak of respectability:

> Bärlach vermag diesen Tarnschleier erst zu zerreissen, als er sich entschlossen hat, rechtswidrige Mittel gegen Gastmann einzusetzen. Es gehört zur Paradoxie dieser Gestalt, dass sie lebenslang ein Verbrecher war, jedoch als Ehrenmann eingeschätzt wurde.[49]

In other words, people trust him because he has material wealth and an upper-crust family history to vouch for his credibility. These social values make it possible for a criminal to be accepted in and trusted by society. Here supposedly mutual *Vertrauen* between people is based on shared material values, namely wealth. Of course Gastmann is exploiting the people's *Vertrauen* in him to aid his continuing innoccuousness.

The same reason for *Vertrauen* is found elsewhere in Dürrenmatt's works, in *Der Verdacht* and in *Frank der Fünfte*. One amazing case of unwarranted *Vertrauen* between people based on flimsy material values is the trust the patients have in their criminal physician, Emmenberger. His assistant Dr. Edith Marlok explains this phenomenon, cynically but undoubtedly truthfully, namely that the reason the patients willingly put themselves in his hands to be operated on without anaesthesia, almost always with fatal consequences, is because Emmenberger promises to prolong their life spans; this would mean that they could enjoy their material

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[49] Seifert, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 77.

comforts (all of Emmenberger's patients are extremely rich) just a little longer. For this reason they trust this diabolical doctor. Thus the reason for the establishment of *Vertrauen* between people is shared values, very often in the form of materialism.

One slightly different aspect of *Vertrauen* in other people which is worth mentioning is *Vertrauen* in human understanding (*Menschenverstand*) or behavior. Bärlach is one character who relies heavily on and really trusts his understanding of people, usually justifiably, as it turns out. His *Vertrauen* in this is what enables him to manipulate Tschanz successfully into unwittingly helping him destroy his adversary Gastmann. This sort of *Vertrauen* is based on one's own knowledge and experience of one's fellow man, so that one can count on him behaving the way one expects: one trusts one's comprehension of human nature. Bärlach had *Vertrauen*, based on his familiarity with human nature, that Tschanz would act in a predictable way, motivated by his professional and personal envy of Schmied; being aware of his greed, Bärlach was able to use it to his own advantage. However, this kind of *Vertrauen*, while having to do with people, is not the same as mutual trust between people. It is based on something much more fundamental than shared values, namely human nature, the essence of man himself.

Now that various reasons for *Vertrauen* between different people have been examined, some examples of true interpersonal trust contrasted with pseudo-trust

relationships might prove useful. The most striking example of real trust between people is to be found in the radio play *Das Unternehmen der Wega*. The play deals with a colony of criminals condemned to live the rest of their lives on Venus, now serving as Earth's penal colony, much as Australia once did. The ghastly hostile environment of that planet has in effect driven the colonists together: they need each other in order to survive, and, totally lacking any material wealth or even security to get in the way, they are left with nothing but themselves to provide mutual comfort. The Venusians have a person in charge: a *Bevollmächtigter*, who is whoever happens to be available when needed. They trust each other to such an extent that any one of them can speak for all of them at any time. They trust the person in charge to wield his power solely for their common good. Which Earthlings can say the same of their own political leaders? In fact, the Earthlings and their treacherous politics of mistrust are contrasted to the Venusians throughout the play. This play is a sad statement on man's inability to establish sincere, trusting interpersonal relationships.

An example of interpersonal trust which turns out to have been false all along is Bärlach's and his assistant Tschanz's relationship. There should be *Vertrauen* between a detective and his assistant; they need to pool their knowledge, and provide each other with potentially valuable evidence while trying to solve their case. That is, in fact,

exactly what their *Vertrauen* is based on: the common goal of solving the case. The reader at first naturally assumes that this is the situation with Bärlach and Tschanz. However, he gradually realizes that Bärlach is withholding information from Tschanz, e.g., the file taken from the murdered officer's apartment by Bärlach, which he does not reveal to Tschanz until the end; the fact that he was carrying a revolver with him when attacked by the dog at Gastmann's party, although Bärlach had previously informed Tschanz that he rarely carried a firearm.[50] There are also numerous descriptive incidents which plainly indicate that neither Bärlach nor Tschanz trust each other, the reason being, of course, that Tschanz committed the murder and is afraid of Bärlach finding him out; and Bärlach is suspicious of his aide practically from the very first. Therefore their trust relationship is all too superficial.

It might be briefly pointed out at this stage that a pseudo-trust relationship exists between the writer of detective stories and the reader. The reader is trying to guess the outcome of the story before the end, by using the morsels of information which the author shares with him, almost as an assistant and a detective do. However, the author only provides the clues he wishes to divulge and usually purposely leads the reader astray to prevent him from prematurely arriving at the solution.

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[50] Dürrenmatt, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 40.

What happens when *Vertrauen* between people is lacking? This occurs alarmingly often in Dürrenmatt's works. Several instances have already been mentioned, such as the situation between the Venusians and the Earthlings in *Das Unternehmen der Wega*. The result of lack of trust between people is fear, which often leads to destruction. This theme is prominant in the fragmentary *Im Coiffeurladen*. The protagonist, de Schangnau, has a troubled conscience because he has no money, and the bank of which he is the director has just gone bankrupt; he is vacationing on worthless credit in a large city. Added to this is the fact that while he was taking a stroll, a radical thrust a bomb into his hands which he promptly and prudently tossed aside, whereupon it blew up the city's most famous monument, an old tower. De Schangnau escaped unnoticed, but he is afraid of being found out; he mistrusts everyone he encounters, fearing they will find out about him and turn him in. It is out of this fear and mistrust that de Schangnau interprets the world; it colors everything he sees. He sits in the barber shop and is wary of the curious glances of the other men; he is suspicious of the barber who accidentally cuts him while discussing the bomb incident. He interprets everything out of fear, when everything most likely is quite normal and innocent, devoid of any sinister significance or malice towards him.

The same situation confronts Pilate in the story *Pilatus*, which Dürrenmatt wrote in 1952, five years before

Im Coiffeurladen. Pilate does not trust the man Jesus he has standing before him, and is afraid because he is dealing with an unknown. This god is not behaving as the Roman had expected:

> In Pilatus erhebt sich ein unlösbarer Widerstreit zwischen seiner Überzeugung, der Angeklagte sei der Gott, und seinem Misstrauen gegen dessen Erscheinung und Benehmen, die seiner Vorstellung von Gott zuwiderlaufen.[51]

Pilate cannot trust this man, because Jesus acts humbly, which is the opposite of what Pilate expects of an all-powerful god standing before a mere mortal: "er glaubt nicht an die Demut des Gottes."[52] Again, fear develops out of mistrust.

A different illustration of this same theme, different because it is humorous, is the opera *Frank der Fünfte*. As mentioned previously, there exists a complete lack of *Vertrauen* between all members of the Frank Bank, since everyone wants to get ahead, and business, i.e., money, comes first. Simply because everyone quite brashly cheats everyone else, there cannot possibly be any trust between people. This is made obvious in the scene where the crooked employees gather, one after another, in the bank's basement vault where each one had secretly planned to defraud the bank of all savings. They end up spending the night all together, each with a gun aimed at the other, for security.

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[51] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 117.
[52] Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 18.

A far more sobering portrait of exactly the same situation, the central theme of this story, is provided by the novel *Der Sturz*. It is strongly reminiscent of Orwell's *1984*: the same atmosphere prevails. However, *1984* attempts to portray all aspects of life during that time, whereas *Der Sturz* focusses on one aspect of life under such conditions, namely the leadership issue: "The members of the Secretariat are bound together by a common fear."[33] They cannot trust each other because under the political system, designed to protect the leader and his power, anything they reveal to anyone could be used to destroy them by someone trying to save his own neck in denouncing another. The prime value in this situation is survival, which can only be achieved through power. This pits everyone against everyone else, since personal survival comes first and consideration for one's cohorts is of secondary value. All behavior must be carefully weighed and evaluated, as N, the character through whose eyes the tale unfolds, does. However, one cannot trust implicitly what is observed: misinterpretation is easy, as the case of O's absence demonstrates. The whole Secretariat erroneously interprets it, out of fear, as signifying O's liquidation, immediately assuming the worst in an ambiguous situation such as this.

There is one paradoxical twist to this complete lack of *Vertrauen* among the members of the Secretariat. As well as dividing them because of their fear of each other, it also

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[33] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 393.

unites them in their fear of their leader. He holds the power over them to control their very existence, which is naturally why they fear him. As the plot develops, it becomes apparent that the Secretariat members fear their leader A more than they fear each other; thus

> schliessen sich die sonst feindlich gespaltenen Mitglieder aus Furcht und Selbsterhaltungstrieb unwillkürlich mehr und mehr zusammen und stürzen sich, zuerst einzeln, dann gemeinsam, mit dem Mut der Verzweiflung in eine 'Flucht nach vorne'(56), indem sie A angreifen.[54]

Paradoxically, in the midst of total mistrust, a group of people finds trust. What actually happens is simply a shift of values: instead of continuing to stalk each other, all band together to attack their leader. However, it is sad to note that as in almost all revolutions, the positive results are short-lived. After the tyrant A is disposed of, a new leader takes his place and order is again restored, but "Aufrücken heisst nur dem Sturz näher rücken."[55] As with the radio play version of *Die Panne* where the hero continues on in exactly the same fashion as before his encounter with the geriatric purveyors of justice, nothing has really changed.

There is only one minor case worth mentioning where lack of *Vertrauen* proves beneficial: namely Bärlach's distrust of the police institution in the novels *Der Richter und sein Henker* and *Der Verdacht*. Had he followed official precepts and dictates, he would certainly have been unable

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[54] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 358.
[55] E. Brock-Sulzer, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Stationen seines Werkes* (Zürich: Arche, 1973), p. 305.

to solve either case. In the former story, he keeps his suspicions of Tschanz to himself, not even informing his superior Lutz; had he done so, it would certainly have alarmed the criminal and precipitated his escape from justice. Bärlach works independently of the police organization of which he is a member; he is a loner, trusting few people and no systems. This is partly because he has his own old-fashioned, down-to-earth style which clashes with the modern law enforcement institution. He

> meinte, er liebte die Ärzte noch weniger als die moderne, wissenschaftliche Kriminalistik.[54]

In the latter story, Bärlach defies all organizational rules (incidentally, all common-sense ones too), since he is retired, by continuing in his professional rôle and trying to solve the case almost single-handedly, though deathly ill. Dürrenmatt's opinion is that institutions are often very restrictive to the individual.

A complex factor with varied effects, predominantly but not solely detrimental as is lack of trust, is exploitation of trust (*Vertrauensausnutzung*.) This theme also occurs very frequently in Dürrenmatt's works, as he often portrays man attempting to dupe his fellow man. Generally, what happens is that the exploiting character uses the values the people ascribe to and manipulates them and attains his own goal: the people serve as the means to his end. But the perpetually inescapable question is: does the end justify

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[54] Dürrenmatt, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 18.

the means?

Claire Zachanassian in *Der Besuch der alten Dame* provides perhaps the clearest example of this; she exploits the town of Güllen's weakness, namely material security, for her own ends, to exact revenge. She knows that money is the highest value for the Gülleners: the temptation to value money and materialistic things above human life is already present in their souls. But Claire definitely aggravates the entire ugly trend of the townspeople preferring the money to Ill's life. The Gülleners had no choice but to submit to Claire's will and serve as her instruments in reaching her goal. However, the townspeople are not totally innocent themselves, for it was precisely because of their hypocritical values which blinded them to justice and led them to accepting bribery and lies over truth that Claire was driven from the town many years ago. Thus when Claire uses them and their lust for money, causing them to bloody their hands with Ill's death and shouldering a collective guilt, it is just. Therefore, in the case of Claire's exploiting the Gülleners' trust, the end does appear to justify the means.

Another complicated example involving a character who repeatedly takes advantage of others' trust is in the novel *Das Versprechen*. Former police commissioner Matthäi is the character in question, and it is his morals that are questionable. There are three major incidents where Matthäi exploits people's trust: first, when the Mägendörfler and

the police have a stand-off confrontation regarding the suspected murderer; the villagers want to lynch the suspect and the police, of course, want to detain him and follow regular channels of justice. A long-standing animosity between the villagers and the state officials makes the situation even more touchy and difficult. Matthäi deals with the crowd of angry villagers by claiming that he has the same interests as they do, identifying himself with them, going so far as to promise them custody of the suspect if necessary. The result of his attitude is as follows:

> Weil Matthäi sie [d.h., die Mägendörfler] ernst nahm, nahmen sie ihn auch ernst.[57]

Matthäi gradually wins the trust of the villagers after arguing logically and apparently empathetically with them; finally they agree to leave the pursuit of justice up to the police. Afterwards, the state attorney brings up the question of Matthäi's actions:

> 'Gewagt, wie Sie vorgegangen sind, Matthäi,' meinte er. 'Stellen Sie sich vor, Sie hätten Ihr Wort halten müssen.' 'Ich wusste, dass das nicht der Fall sein würde,' antwortete der Kommissär gelassen.[58]

He gave the villagers his word that he would surrender the suspect to them if need be, but one strongly suspects that he intended to use this as an assurance of his supposed sincerity and intends to have his own way in the end, which is exactly what happens. Thus, Matthäi uses the villagers' newly-won trust in him to get what he wants.

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[57] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Das Versprechen* (Zürich: Arche, 1958), p. 51.
[58] Dürrenmatt, *Das Versprechen*, p. 58.

The second occasion Matthäi quite obviously violates another's trust in him is when questioning Dr. Locher in order to extract information regarding a possible psychological profile of the murderer. The author himself reveals Matthäi's intent:

> Matthäi schwieg aufs neue. Wie erschrocken. Er war ein Mensch, der nie auf sich zu sprechen kam und nun doch gezwungen war, es einmal zu tun, weil er diesen kleinen vogelartigen Arzt mit der lächerlichen Brille brauchte, der ihm allein weiterhelfen konnte, dem er aber dafür sein Vertrauen schenken musste.[39]

Matthäi induces the doctor to speculate on possible traits the murderer might possess, which provides him with leads (which turn out at the end of the story to be totally correct). This is against the doctor's will and professional judgement, but he acquiesces upon Matthäi's assurance that his guesses will not be taken seriously by the detective: "'Machen Sie meine Fiktion mit und untersuchen wir, was dabei herauskommt.'"[40] But after Matthäi gets the information he wants from the trusting physician, he admits that it will prove useful for him in practice, and the doctor realizes he has been taken advantage of:

> Alles, was er [d.h., der Arzt] ihm [Matthäi] gesagt habe, sei nur eine Spekulation, ein blosses Gedankenspiel ohne wissenschaftlichen Wert, erklärte der Arzt, darüber verärgert, dass er getäuscht worden war und die Absicht Matthäis nicht durchschaut hatte.[41]

This incident also highlights Matthäi's methods: the doctor refuses to trust anything but tried and true so-called

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[39] Ibid., pp. 128-129.
[40] Dürrenmatt, *Das Versprechen*, p. 135.
[41] Ibid., p. 141.

scientific methods, whereas Matthäi works in a more unorthodox fashion, willing to try anything. In the end, it is his method which works, again bringing up the question of whether the means are justified by the end.

The third example of Matthäi crassly breaking someone's trust in him is when he takes a small child and her disreputable mother in off the street to live with him at his gas station, in order to use the little girl, unknown to either her or her mother, as bait in the trap he is setting for the murderer. The mother is justifiably bitter when she finally discovers Matthäi's plan, as both people were used by the former police inspector, and the child was exposed to great danger. In all cases, the purpose of Matthäi's exploiting people's trust is to catch the murderer who, by his continuing freedom, is menacing all little children of the area. Thus his methods cannot be condemned outright. But he cannot be unreservedly lauded either:

> Nor can Matthäi be considered 'a representative of the ethical,' as Auden would have it, for his means are sometimes dangerous to the lives of others: he dares a mob of townspeople to overwhelm the police and take the first suspect, a tramp, into their own hands; later he uses Annemarie as bait. [...] His decision to pursue the case apparently causes his dissipation in drink; this failure does 'outrage ethics.'[42]

Matthäi simply lacks ethics in all three situations in that he pretends to have the same values as the people he is dealing with in order to gain their trust and manipulate

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[42] Roger Ramsey, "Parody and Mystery in Dürrenmatt's *The Pledge*," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 17 (1971-2), p. 527.

them when, in fact, he does not . This is certainly fraud and deception; but his goal, justice, is also undoubtedly noble. In the three cases mentioned above, there were no tragically drastic consequences to Matthäi's ethically questionable actions, but in one instance harm did result. Spycher blames the figure of Matthäi of driving the first suspect to suicide by driving him over the brink, so to speak, with unusually intensive interrogation and then neglecting to help the man, even though the police inspector was convinced that this suspect was not the murderer:

> Im Stich gelassen von dem einzigen Menschen, dem er sein Vertrauen geschenkt hat, erhängt er sich in der Zelle aus Verzweiflung.[43]

Matthäi himself is fully cognizant of his failed responsibility; he admits later:

> "Der Hausierer hat sich an mich gewandt, und ich habe ihm nicht geholfen."[44]

Just to mention a less significant example of *Vertrauensausnutzung* from another work which still adds to the tally of instances of exploitation of trust: in the novel *Die Panne*, Traps has an affair with the boss's wife. He subconsciously uses this situation (breaking the woman's trust that he is seeing her because of herself, not because of professional ambitions) to kill his boss, by disclosing the fact to a fellow worker whom he knows to be indiscreet, so the news will reach the boss who has a weak heart. Traps uses the woman to advance in the business world.

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[43] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 307.
[44] Dürrenmatt, *Das Versprechen*, p. 102.

This example leads to another kind of *Vertrauen* and one which is very often abused, owing to the fact that material gain is the prime reason for this relationship between people, rather than it being based on human values. This kind of trust is professional, and occurs with any kind of business, ranging from banking to medicine. One blatant example of exploitation of trust in the professional sphere is in the whole structure of the opera *Frank der Fünfte*. The foundation of the play is, of course, that it is a gangster bank operation, contrary to all respectable appearances; the employees and management of the Frank Bank steal the clients' money upon receipt of it. It happens very often in today's dishonorable business world that customers trust in a business firm's integrity and are consistently taken advantage of because of this trust for the sake of materialism.

Another situation involving professional *Vertrauen* is in the medical business, between doctor and patient. This is based on the layman leaving it up to the doctor to be knowledgeable about a vastly complicated subject that only a specialist can handle competently. The layman trusts that the physician will take care of him. However, this trust can be risky as the layman is necessarily helpless in his ignorance, having to rely implicitly on the doctor. The medical business is just that--a business--often motivated more strongly by money than by a philanthropic desire to heal:

> Hospitals as money-making institutions belong to his [Dürrenmatt's] nightmares of terror, as in *The Pledge*, in *The Quarry*. The weakness of the patients in the hands of their doctors is a symbol of the more profound helplessness of us all.[66]

Of course, a mention of the play *Die Physiker*, with Frau Doktor Mathilde von Zahnd in relentless control of everything, must be included here. Emmenberger is not motivated by money, at least not primarily; he uses his patients to achieve the sublime sensation of absolute freedom by operating on them without anaesthesia. It is at that moment that he feels truly free, by wielding absolute power over another human being.

Generally, it is very tempting to take advantage of the public in a business relationship involving a client's or customer's *Vertrauen* in a professional capacity. This is due to the constant potential for conflict in motivation, shuttling between money and philanthropy. It is easy for the professional to get extra money out of a client who trusts him. From this one might conclude that materialism is an obstacle to spiritual values, an idea which will be probed more deeply in the next chapter. Added to this is the fact that the trust people place in professionals tends to be emotional, uncritical; they want to be taken care of without having to involve themselves intellectually, since the professional is the one who certifiably possesses the requisite knowledge. Professional confidence thus becomes blind trust, which, according to both Dürrenmatt and common

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[66] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 271.

sense, is very risky.

To recap in reference to the topic of *Vertrauen* in other people: the individual stands alone nowadays, and best does not rely on others:

> Jeder muss versuchen, durchzuhalten in der Gewissheit, nur für sich einzustehen, nicht mehr für ein Staatsgefüge, das ihm fremd ist, oder für einen Mitmenschen, der in der Anonymität versunken ist.[‘‘]

B. Blind *Vertrauen*

Blind trust in beliefs, why this type of trust even occurs, the results of it, and Dürrenmatt's personal stance concerning it will now be examined. It is a recurring phenomenon in Dürrenmatt's works; he obviously considers this theme a very important one. The reason underlying it has already been mentioned in connection with Arnolph's "sittliches Weltgebäude," and how he stubbornly clings to his faith in morality despite all realistic contra-indications: it provides him with a certain stability in a society which is foreign to him.

Perhaps Dürrenmatt's second play might provide some valuable insights into blind trust, being its main theme: it is a study of blind *Vertrauen*, appropriately entitled *Der Blinde*. The blind man, a former duke living in a war-ravaged and now ruined land and physically incapable of witnessing the truth, believes that his land is still intact. His entourage and children want to spare him the pain of the

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‘‘ Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 52.

truth by not telling him that he is in reality sojourning in ruins. His belief in the wholeness of the surrounding world is truly blind and exceedingly strong; he clings to it and reiterates it repeatedly throughout the play. Efforts by the villain Negro da Ponte to destroy the duke's irrational belief and demonstrate the real deplorable state of affairs fail. The purpose of this unshakable faith is as follows:

> Dürrenmatts Herzog ist physisch blind; er kann nicht sehen, nur glauben, und in seinem Glauben findet er Trost und Glück. [...] Mit dem Augenlicht hat er den Sinn für die Wahrheit verloren: er sieht die Wahrheit nicht mehr. Um nicht zu verzweifeln, greift er nach dem Glauben als rettendem Strohhalm. Der Glaube ist aber nur Opium für ihn, denn es gibt keinen gerechten Gott, nichts, auf das er in Wirklichkeit hoffen könnte. Der Glaube ist eine wohltuende Illusion.[7]

The blind duke refuses to give up his belief in God and God's will, and the fictitious rightness of the world around him, probably because he realizes subconsciously that if he stops believing just once, doubts would assail him and remain with him forever, permanently banishing any security for him:

> Längst nämlich hat der Herzog erkannt, dass für einen, der auf die Mitteilsamkeit anderer angewiesen ist, das, was man gemeinhin als Wahrheit bezeichnet, irrelevant geworden ist-selbst dann, wenn es sich tatsächlich um die Wahrheit handelte. Denn mehr noch als jeder Sehende muss ein Blinder an die Wahrheit *glauben*, muss er das, was für ihn Wahrheitswert besitzen soll, auch für wahr halten können.[8]

In other words, the blind man is totally dependent on the sighted to report to him, and he must trust them; for if he

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[7] Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, pp. 29-30.
[8] Herbert Peter Madler, "Dürrenmatts mutiger Mensch," *Hochland*, 62 (1970), pp. 41-42.

doubts once, the possibility of deceit would thereafter perpetually exist. Belief in reality is not empirical in this case (as it perhaps never is, but especially here,) but rather emotional. For the sightless duke, blind *Vertrauen* is for the most part a positive thing because it sustains him in life. If he would not have it, he would have the will to survive no longer.

But it is a different matter when blind *Vertrauen* concerning a specific idea or theory is adopted as the absolute truth and turns into an ideology:

> Dürrenmatt misstraut jeder Ideologie, [...] weil er für lebendige, ehrliche und kritische Auseinandersetzung ist.'[9]

Dürrenmatt explains why ideologies become necessary, namely only in negative situations:

> Eine Gesellschaftsordnung braucht dann eine Ideologie, wenn sie nicht mehr stimmt. [...] Ideologien sind Ausreden, an der Macht zu bleiben, oder Vorwände, an die Macht zu kommen.'[10]

Thus, paradoxically, where sincere belief is lacking, the conditions ripe for an ideology exist. It is a belief too stringently adhered to:

> Voraussetzung für [die] Entwicklung zu Ideologien ist [...] der totale Glaubensverlust und die verkrampfte und krankhafte Suche nach einer neuen und tragenden Glaubensgrundlage.'[11]

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[9] Werner Oberle, "Grundsätzliches zum Werk Friedrich Dürrenmatts," in *Der unbequeme Dürrenmatt*, ed. Gottfried Benn (Basel: Basilius, 1962), p. 26.
[10] Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, pp. 45 and 51.
[11] Gerwin Marahrens, "Friedrich Dürrenmatts *Ehe des Herrn Mississippi*," in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Gerhard P. Knapp (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 111.

These are the reasons for the development of blind *Vertrauen*: it arms the handicapped with extra strength to survive.

But blind *Vertrauen* is detrimental and carries dire consequences with it, as will be shown below. The essence of blind trust will now be examined. Blind trust is an irrational phenomenon, completely based on emotion and, in fact, interfering with objective reasoning, as the adjective 'blind' suggests. Because of its emotional nature, blind trust prevents the necessary scrutiny of that in which the trust is placed. One adopts it blindly and does not examine it sufficiently. This is the disadvantage of this type of trust, which does not occur with ordinary *Vertrauen*. An illustration of this is provided by the blind confidence that Emmenberger's patients have in him:

> Dürrenmatt isolates the most sinister aspect of Emmenberger's behavior as an exploitation of an uncanny fascination he has for his doomed patients. Because of this fascination, the patients submit knowingly to operations without anaesthetic: 'Seine Teufelei war, dass er all dies mit der Zustimmung seiner Opfer ausführte.'[73]

This is certainly a case where these people should re-examine the faith they have in their doctor.

Blind trust in something often turns into a monomania for Dürrenmatt's characters. They pursue what they believe in at all costs, with no regard for the world or the people around them. This is very destructive because of the

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[73] Peter Gontrum, "Ritter, Tod und Teufel: Protagonists and Antagonists in the Prose Works of Friedrich Dürrenmatt," *Seminar*, 1 (1965), p. 90.

exaggerated importance placed on that which is believed in:

> Dürrenmatt's plays are full of monomaniacs, most of them with strong inclinations to cause the death of other characters.'[73]

The most obvious example which comes to mind first is Schwitter in *Der Meteor*, whose monomania consists of wanting to die at all costs, yet being resurrected repeatedly and not believing in his own resurrection. He brings about the death of many a character due to his preoccupation with his own death and total lack of consideration for all people around him. It is interesting to note that this principle in Dürrenmatt's works is the same principle underlying the hero and his actions in the classical plays of the Greeks and the later French authors such as Corneille and Racine: the hero remains true to one absolute ideal, usually having to do with honor, no matter what the cost. This always turns out to be destructive to the self as well as to those around one, since perfect ideals do not fare well in the imperfect and unabsolute world. This is why the hero causes the demise of others and himself: his absolute ideal is irreconcilable with the world.

Another kind of blind *Vertrauen* occurs in the sphere of religious belief. It is termed *Buchstabenglauben* in German, and denotes an uncritical, blind belief in the tenets of Christianity. This is most clearly evident in Dürrenmatt's first play *Es steht geschrieben*:

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[73] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 306.

> Es ist damit das Problem der Tradition in einer für Dürrenmatt characteristischen Weise aufgegriffen--an dem Punkt nämlich, wo die Tradition zur blossen Bindung an das, 'was geschrieben steht' und damit zum Buchstabenglauben degeneriert.'[74]

The reason why the Anabaptists in this play cling to their belief so desperately in the turbulent times they must endure is for exactly the same reason as explained above:

> Die heiligen Narren dieses Stückes sind Suchende, die sich in Verzweiflung ans Wort des Evangeliums klammern.'[75]

Another situation displaying this blind faith is to be found in the short story *Der Hund*. The daughter believes completely in her father the preacher, trusts whole-heartedly that what he is doing is right, even though he broke up the family by leaving the mother and sons, taking his daughter with him and losing his good business. The narrator poses the crucial question to the daughter:

> "Glaubst du denn, dass es die Wahrheit ist, die dein Vater verkündet?" fragte ich. "Es ist die Wahrheit," sagte das Mädchen. "Ich habe es immer gewusst, dass es die Wahrheit ist, und so bin ich mit ihm gegangen in diesen Keller und wohne hier mit ihm."'[76]

This shows the girl's total, unquestioning confidence in her father, probably because of their blood relationship; other possible reasons are not readily apparent. She also had total trust that some day the man destined to be hers would come to celebrate the nuptials with her, and that he would banish her fear of the giant dog who was her father's

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[74] Beda Allemann, "Dürrenmatt. Es steht geschrieben," in *Das deutsche Drama vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart*, II, ed. Benno von Wiese (Düsseldorf: A. Bagel, 1958), p. 418.
[75] Ibid., p. 421.
[76] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Der Hund," in *Die Stadt* (Zürich: Arche, 1952), pp. 28-29.

constant, albeit unwelcome and threatening companion. The reason for this trust of hers is not explained either.

On the other hand, the reason for the blind *Vertrauen* of another character from *Die Stadt* is very clear: it is the same motivation as that for ideologies, namely not faith but fear. The man is the guard in the story *Die Stadt*. For that is exactly his problem: he does not know with any certainty whether he is guard or prisoner, having no concrete knowledge about his situation in the underground prison. But he chooses to believe that he is a guard, and tries to prove this to himself empirically, but cannot. Everything remains totally ambiguous.'' He himself states:

> So war mir denn der Gedanke tröstlich, dass ich nur dann mein schweres Amt eines Wärters werde zur Zufriedenheit meiner Vorgesetzten ausüben können, wenn ich ihrer Versicherung, ich sei frei, unbedingtes Vertrauen entgegenbrachte (wenn auch der Grund dieses Vertrauens [...] nicht Glaube ist, sondern Angst.)''*

This is the basis for the guard's *Vertrauen*, fear; it is much like the lack of faith situation leading to a desperate search for something to believe in, to provide a base from

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'' The guard's situation, tangling with an ambivalent administration whose intentions are unclear to him yet which wields power over him, with the resulting painful, dominating uncertainty is very reminiscent of the mood in Kafka's writings. Yet Dürrenmatt denies being acquainted with Kafka's work at the time of writing *Die Stadt*: "Wenn Sie meine ersten Prosasachen lesen...[...] ich kannte zu jener Zeit Kafka [...] nicht, aber ich kannte bei der Konzeption der Sammlung 'Die Stadt' das Höhlengleichnis von Platon. Kafka freilich hat das auch gekannt...Kafka konnte ich erst später kaufen." Peter Fringeli, *Nachdenken mit und über Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Ein Gespräch* (Breitenbach/Schweiz: Jeger-Moll Verlag, 1977), n. pag.

'* Dürrenmatt, *Die Stadt*, p. 137.

which to operate:

> Der Wärter wählt zum Grundstein seines geistigen Gebäudes ein bewusst **blindes** Vertrauen in das Wohlwollen der Verwaltung, ein Vertrauen, das allerdings nicht auf einem kindhaft bejahenden Glauben beruht, sondern auf der Angst vor der unerträglichen Möglichkeit des Übelwollens der Verwaltung. [emphasis added]''

But at the same time, another important message of Dürrenmatt's is that one should never place limitless trust in the state and institutions: "Den staatlichen Behörden soll man, nach Dürrenmatt, nicht vertrauen, erst recht nicht blind."•• This will be elaborated upon in the final chapter of this thesis.

There is one final major figure in Dürrenmatt's prose works who exhibits this blind *Vertrauen*, and that is Inspector Matthäi in *Das Versprechen*. His blind *Vertrauen* lies in his supreme self-confidence. He is totally convinced that his own rather unorthodox methods of tracking down the child murderer are perfectly correct, and as it turns out, he is right. He firmly believes that a picture painted by the victim yields valuable clues which will be helpful in solving the case, while everyone else dismisses the picture as insignificant doodling. He is so convinced that his baited trap for the criminal, the gas station situated along a particular stretch of highway with the little girl resembling the last victim residing there, will flush the criminal out of the surrounding countryside that he risks

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'' Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 100.
•• Ibid., p. 101.

the little girl's life and allows his own life to dissipate into insanity while he waits year after year for the murderer to show up.

Because Matthäi has such unconditional belief in his own methods and influence, he is annihilated when something more powerful than himself takes control, namely chance; for he has left no leeway in his plans to accommodate anything unforeseen:

> His brilliant logic and use of a psychiatrist's theory pierce the mysterious laws governing the criminal's behavior pattern, but they do not allow for 'das Zufällige, Unberechenbare, Inkommensurable' (p. 19).''

With Matthäi's downfall, Dürrenmatt demonstrates the catastrophic results of man believing he has the absolute power to control events in the world: this is arrogance, hubris, on his part, and he must learn humility. Thus, this kind of absolute trust in logic will fail, because arbitrary chance will most likely destroy everything built up on this trust. Blind, absolute self-confidence is too extreme; man must learn that he is not the center of the universe.

Some results of this kind of *Vertrauen* have already been mentioned; several more will now briefly be examined. The positive aspects of the blind Duke's faith have already been illustrated: he is provided with the strength to survive. However, because of its extremely rigid, uncompromising nature, this faith is not without negative problematical ramifications: "The Duke in *The Blind Man* was

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'' Gontrum, "Ritter, Tod und Teufel," p. 96.

an exponent of blind belief; his actions led to death, murder and destruction."[82] And the blind Duke's opponent throughout the play, Negro da Ponte, summarizes in a compact way at the end of the play: "Euer Glaube hat Eueren Sohn und Eure Tochter getötet."[83] Thus the effects of the Duke's blind faith are both beneficial (to him) and destructive (to his offspring,) with the destructive aspect far outweighing the beneficial as it eradicated the Duke's most precious surviving possessions: his descendents.

A very similar figure,in fact the central figure in Dürrenmatt's next play, is Romulus:

> Romulus [...] is in fact a megalomaniac, a kinsman of Knipperdollinck or of the Duke. Like them, he sacrifices those closest to him to his idée fixe; more clearly than the earlier characters, he is put to right by reality.[84]

It is hoped that Tiusanen,in using the term "megalomaniac," does not mean it in the usual sense of 'power-hungry;' he is referring to the fact that Romulus takes it upon himself to judge the whole Roman empire and sentence it to death. This constitutes hubris on Romulus' part, to believe that he alone will save the world (monomania,) but no megalomania, for he is not seeking power explicitly.

Taking *Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi* as another example, it is also Tiusanen who states that Dürrenmatt

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[82] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 140.
[83] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Der Blinde* (Zürich: Arche, 1960), p. 76.
[84] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 83.

> is a critic and a parodist of those who believe in formulas of thought. His Mississippi is just as blind in his reliance on Anastasia as the Duke in his faith--or as Bodo in his belief in love.[55]

What Dürrenmatt's criticism of blind *Vertrauen* is expressing basically is that the principle believed in comes first, at all costs, usually at other people's expense. In other words, such a belief runs counter to humanistic values. One detailed illustration can be found again in *Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi*. Mississippi,

> dieser ideologische Verfechter realer Hirngespinste sucht in der Ehe mit der Gattenmörderin Anastasia [...] die beleidigte Gerechtigkeit zu versöhnen. Der Versuch scheitert, ehe er begonnen ist: hier die Idee des Gesetzes um des Gesetzes willen, dort der nackte,erdhafte Trieb, aber keiner ein Mensch. Mississippis Kampf um das Gesetz verliert seinen Anspruch auf Wahrheit. Ein Gesetz besagt Verantwortlichkeit, aber Antwort kann nur geben, wer ein wahres Wort mächtig ist: der Mensch. Des Staatsanwaltes alttestamentlich Racheformeln aber schieben sich als unpersönliche Macht zwischen den Gesetzgeber Gott und das menschliche Gewissen.[56]

Thus when man is unfree to make the choice between good and evil because he must adhere to some regulation or law, true morality is lacking. Also, the inhumanity of beliefs such as Gastmann's and Emmenberger's has already been noted.

Finally, this type of blind *Vertrauen* fails to help its proponents in any way, as a belief should. It has been found that these blind beliefs are far too rigid and uncompromising to help the holder deal successfully with the real world, as they do not take into account such factors as

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[55] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 105.
[56] Josef Scherer, "Dürrenmatts mutiger Mensch. Versuch einer Deutung von Friedrich Dürrenmatts Menschenbild," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 169 (1962), p. 309.

chance, human nature, etc. Concerning the values of the three ideology-personifying characters in *Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi*, i.e., Mississippi, Saint-Claude and Graf Bodo von Übelohe:

> Die heutige Welt wird als eine Reaktion auf alle drei angesehen, wobei das Absolute des Religiösen und Politisch-Ideellen relativiert und ruiniert wird durch das Allzumenschliche, durch Anastasia, "Frau Welt".[*]

Archiliochos in *Grieche sucht Griechin* is in a similar predicament with his blind *Vertrauen* in his own brand of strict morality, like Mississippi; and his faulty view of the world is corrected by reality, instigated by a female figure resembling Mississippi's Anastasia in that both have dubious sexual mores. Matthäi's absolute confidence in his investigative methods does not aid him to net the criminal in the end, as chance steps in and ruins the plan.

A striking example of intense religious faith, (in this case: blind *Vertrauen* in the gospel writings) not aiding survival of the believers is to be found in *Es steht geschrieben*. Typical of the Anabaptists' eyes remaining stubbornly closed to reality is their leader Jan Matthison:

> In his blind faith in God's will and ability to guard Münster, Matthison strides single-handedly against the enemy: a clown of faith, killed immediately.[**]

He ignores the reality of the enemy's bows, arrows and other assorted weapons, believing his faith to be all-powerful and capable of conquering all worldly threats (including the

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[*] Marahrens, "Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi," p. 97.
[**] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 52.

laws of physics.) Despite, or perhaps because of, his belief is the believer destroyed. Because of their blind faith in the scriptures, supposedly God's literal word, the Anabaptists undertook the impossible:

> The Anabaptists were so confident of God's favor that they set out to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.''

Again, this is a manifestation of hubris on their part: unshakable belief that they can demand and attain the absolute in this imperfect world. They are also destroyed by the world. Their blind faith has not helped banish evil and bring good into the world as they had wanted; it did not help them to survive, but in fact speeded up their downfall.

It becomes obvious from these examples that blind *Vertrauen* is worse than useless: it is dangerous. Dürrenmatt is well aware that humans need belief in something to base their actions upon:

> Dürrenmatt weiss natürlich, dass der Mensch als geistiges Wesen nur dann wahrhaft leben kann, wenn er Ideen entwirft und sich diesen überpersönlichen Ideen unterordnet. Soll die Idee einen wahrhaften Wert besitzen, dann muss sie überpersönlicher Natur sein und an sich einen absoluten Anspruch stellen. Verletzt die Idee aber das ureigenste Wesen des Menschen und will sie ihren Totalitätsanspruch durchsetzen, entartet sie zur Ideologie.''

The harm ideologies can bring has already been witnessed. Dürrenmatt's advice regarding belief has been assessed as follows:

'' Robert E. Holzapfel, *Three Facets of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Drama: The Way of the Individual to God--the Way of the Individual in the World--the World as Chaos*, Diss. University of Iowa 1965, pp. 20-21.

'' Marahrens, "Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi," pp. 109-110.

> Dürrenmatt's position is in between; we should neither believe nor disbelieve blindly. The world is neither the creation of an omnipotent, man-loving God, nor a product of blind chance. Or we should not, as monomaniacs do, base all our deeds on either of these views.''

C. *Vertrauen* in Evil: *Das Böse*

Examining the factor of evil in the world will add more dimensions to the concept of *Vertrauen* as it is being discussed here. Dürrenmatt contends that evil is inherent in the world and within man himself. It also plays an active part in some of the author's concepts such as his view of God. It will be seen how evil is inseparable from good in Dürrenmatt's works. Finally, incidents of characters choosing *Vertrauen* in evil rather than laudable values will be examined.

Evil is to be found everywhere, according to Dürrenmatt, even at the top of the hierarchy (world order) of the universe, with God at the top, man in the middle, and animal and plant life in the lower strata. Dürrenmatt's conception of God can be termed as being that of the 'böser Gott,' meaning that God is not above acting cruelly, badly, even evilly towards man. Dürrenmatt's personal idea of God will be more extensively explored in Chapter IV. It is interesting to note that Dürrenmatt's idea of the 'böser Gott' as being the element which thwarts man in his attempts to accomplish anything gradually changes. In the first few works, e.g., in the whole of *Die Stadt*, man's enemy is

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'' Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 140.

definitely a Christian version of God with an extra portion of evil characteristics added. This idea of God being responsible for man's repeated downfalls changes, to be replaced by the idea of chance (*Zufall*) as the thwarting element. In other words, mayhem willfully wreaked upon man by an evil God gradually becomes mayhem arbitrarily wreaked upon man by an impersonal and inanimate fate or chance. *Zufall* is neither evil nor good; but in Dürrenmatt's early works, God is certainly wicked.

Evil is not only the exclusive dominant characteristic of God, according to Dürrenmatt. He is also convinced that

> der Mensch ein korruptes Wesen ist. Eine Politik, die mit dem Menschen als nicht korruptem Wesen rechnet, wird unweigerlich scheitern. Die Korruption selbst ist eine Tatsache. [...] Wir werden mit der Korruption nicht fertig, weil jedes Handeln, um wirksam werden zu können, den Menschen auf eine gewisse Weise idealisieren muss.'[2]

Evil is a monstrous obstacle to doing good and having *Vertrauen* in higher values, especially since it is an integral part of man himself: he must overcome it within himself. A clear illustration of this is provided by the characters of *Frank der Fünfte*, who claim they all desire to do good but just cannot withstand the temptation of wealth. The evil of succumbing to material gain and throwing aside higher values such as honesty, treating their fellow man well, etc. is present in man's very nature, and these characters do not have the moral strength to overcome this

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[2] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Gespräch mit Heinz Ludwig Arnold* (Zürich: Arche, 1976), p. 73.

evil, placing their *Vertrauen* in higher values. It is obvious that the evil in man is a very potent force, and this is the case not only with man, but also with the world. People who do not have the moral strength to conquer the evil within themselves and progress to fight the evil in the world, with *Vertrauen* in higher values to fortify them, are usually crushed by *das Böse*, so extensive and powerful is its strength. Dürrenmatt makes this principle clear with the figure of Bärlach, who, while fighting the forces of evil in *Der Richter und sein Henker*, gets caught in its power:

> Im Namen eines höheren Rechtes handelnd, schrecken beide [d.h., Matthäi und Bärlach] nicht davor zurück, privat zu aussergesetzlichen Mitteln zu greifen, und verstricken sich dabei selber, bewusst oder unbewusst, im Bösen, gegen das sie entschlossen und tapfer anrennen.'[3]

Evil is so forceful that as soon as one concerns oneself with it to combat it, one is contaminated by it. Bärlach's thoughts, or the omniscient author's comments during his encounter with the giant guard dog (reminiscent of the giant dog in the tale *Der Hund*) outside of Gastmann's house make this clear:

> Er sah nach dem Tier unerschrocken, aber gebannt. So hatte ihn das Böse immer wieder in seinen Bann gezogen, das grosse Rätsel, das zu lösen ihn immer wieder aufs neue verlockte.'[4]

All these factors demonstrate how potent evil is in the world, and how difficult it is to fight and overcome it, even fortified with strength derived from *Vertrauen* in

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[3] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 325.
[4] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Der Richter und sein Henker* (Zürich: Benzinger Verlag, 1952), pp. 38-39.

certain principles. Although they defend these exemplary principles in which the characters have *Vertrauen*, like Bärlach who fights for justice, this still does not necessarily give them the strength to be victorious over the evil forces, which are so powerful that they exert a certain control over the characters. Even neutral things such as knowledge are easily contaminated by evil. Möbius in *Die Physiker* is an example of this: he betrays knowledge by trying to flee from his responsibility towards it and attempting to cover it up instead:

> Die Weisheit ist an sich weder gut noch böse--ihre Kraft kann von beiden Prinzipien ausgenützt werden, auch vom Bösen. [...] Wenn die Menschheit die Weisheit verrät [wie Möbius es tut,] kann sie um so leichter durch das Böse ausgenützt werden.'[8]

A final word concerning knowledge and evil: if man wishes to triumph over evil, knowledge (in the sense of wisdom) is insufficient for him to succeed. Bärlach, for instance, is a wise old man who also has a strong faith in humanitarian and other higher values, but this is not enough to prevent him from being drawn into the clutches of evil (namely being captured by Emmenberger in *Der Verdacht*) and almost being annihilated by it. This is evil's might, and it is an ominous, ever-present threat in life.

Not only is evil inherent in life; it is also inseparable from good. The two opposite elements are irrevocably joined. This idea is perhaps best illustrated by

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[8] Charles Jauslin, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Zur Struktur seiner Dramen* (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1964), p. 118.

the symbolic dog of the story *Der Hund*. Clearly symbolic of evil, it never leaves the benevolent pastor's side, showing how evil and goodness, two sides of the same coin, are inextricably and permanently joined. Even Bärlach, the champion who fights unceasingly for justice and good, is not purely a 'good' figure: it has already been noted how he came under evil's spell while struggling to overcome it; and how he was driven to use questionable means to be victorious finally in his fight. Walter Seifert points out that Bärlach's rationality, one of his great characteristics with which he cool-headedly and successfully confronts his adversaries, is not pure rationality but also contains some irrational, emotional characteristics.'' For instance, Bärlach dryly informs his underling Tschanz in *Der Richter und sein Henker*, near the beginning of the adventure:

> "Ich bin ein grosser alter schwarzer Kater, der gern Mäuse frisst."''

During the final dénouement scene, Bärlach is described as

> mächtig und gelassen, das Bild einer übermenschlichen Überlegenheit, ein Tiger, der mit seinem Opfer spielt.''

Even more striking is this image of him, as he swallows down his last (gargantuan) supper:

'' Walter Seifert, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der Richter und sein Henker* (München: Oldenbourg, 1975), pp. 101-102.
'' Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 21.
'' Ibid., p. 138.

> Gierig die Speisen dieser Welt in sich hineinschlingend, zwischen den Kiefern zermalmend, ein Dämon, der einen unendlichen Hunger stillte. An der Wand zeichnete sich, zweimal vergrössert, in wilden Schatten seine Gestalt ab, die kräftigen Bewegungen der Arme, das Senken des Kopfes, gleich dem Tanz eines triumphierenden Negerhäuptlings. Tschanz sah voll Entzetzen nach diesem unheimlichen Schauspiel.''

This distinctly demonic apparition of the man, who uses his own intelligence to its fullest potential, confirms that he is not solely a rational figure. When the rational side of Bärlach and his foes is at the fore, chess images are used (Tschanz is used by Bärlach like a pawn to secure the downfall of his archenemy, Gastmann); when irrationality dominates, animal or primitive imagery such as those mentioned above are used.

> Rationalität und Irrationalität erwiesen sich als zwei Seiten desselben inneren Zustandes, eben der teuflischen Verführung des Geistes durch den Geist.'[99]

Seifert also emphasizes this aspect in the figure of Bärlach as being at the very basis of the characterization, which we believe is an overemphasis. He maintains that Bärlach is practically as guilty as his foe, because he agrees to take part in this frivolous bet to prove a point: namely that crime cannot go undetected because some chance happening will always make it impossible to hide; while his adversary Gastmann believes in exactly the opposite, namely that precisely because of chance, crimes can always remain undetected if properly executed. Bärlach admits this himself

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'' Ibid., p. 136.
[99] Seifert, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 67.

to Gastmann towards the end of the story:

> "Du bist in jener Nacht in der Türkei schuldig geworden, weil du die Wette geboten hast, Gastmann, und ich, weil ich sie angenommen habe."[101]

On a whim they make a bet to prove this theoretical point, which results in innocent people being sacrificed, Gastmann's victims, while proving his point that he cannot be arrested for these murders.

Bärlach uses extra-legal means to apprehend Gastmann finally by manipulating his underling Tschanz into executing Gastmann for Schmied's murder, which the latter had not even committed. Tschanz had previously killed Schmied. Bärlach is cognizant of this, and even admits as much to Gastmann:

> "Es ist mir nicht gelungen, dich der Verbrechen zu überführen, die du begangen hast, nun werde ich dich eben dessen überführen, das du nicht begangen hast." [102]

In other words, Police Inspector Bärlach, as well as his criminal opponent, puts aside humanitarian moral principles completely inconsiderate of other people's basic right to live, in order to achieve what he wants:

> Die Trennung von Gut und Böse ist [...] aufgehoben. Beide, Täter und Verfolger, verstossen gegen übergeordnete Moralvorstellungen, verfallen dem Bösen und werden schuldig.[103]

Of course this is true to a certain extent, and reiterates that evil also resides within good people and is inseparable from good; however we believe that Bärlach's having to resort to such drastic measures in order to destroy such an

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[101] Dürrenmatt, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 99.
[102] Ibid., p. 121.
[103] Seifert, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 95.

evil-doer underlines the message that the evil in the world is strong, and that upright principles and means by themselves are not always adequate in vanquishing evil. It must be borne in mind that Bärlach is fighting for absolute justice when he attempts again and again to destroy Gastmann even with unorthodox means--a case of the end justifying the means. Dürrenmatt also implies with this tale that our official system of justice is not adequate to deal with the evil in our world, which becomes obvious when one glances at our overflowing jails, plea-bargaining tactics and repeat rate of criminality.

Finally, there are those who place their *Vertrauen* in evil: evil people or evil values. The motivation for this kind of deplorable course of action is usually that the people or values appear strong (just how powerful evil is in the world has been discussed above), which means that both can give strength to the people who choose to put their *Vertrauen* in these negative things. People generally tend to shirk assuming responsibility, and if someone is willing to take over for them, they are definitely inclined to relinquish control and give this person their complete *Vertrauen*, even if he is evil. The best example is to be found in the novel *Der Verdacht*:

> Man's willingness to submit to evil without resisting it [...] [is] portrayed in the story of the sanatorium. The meek acceptance by the patients of the sadistic cure--always fatal--that Emmenberger offers symbolizes the readiness of desperate or frustrated people to turn for relief to anyone who

offers a panacea.'[104]

It is interesting to note that in Dürrenmatt's works there is a forerunner to the figure of Emmenberger: the theater director in the story of the same name in the volume *Die Stadt*. Both men are evil and wield power over others who have willingly placed their *Vertrauen* in these men, with horrifying results. Gastmann of the later *Der Richter und sein Henker*, pre-dating Emmenberger, is a very similar figure but is not so single-mindedly demonically destructive. These are two prominent examples of characters who have put their *Vertrauen* in evil values.

These two do not suffer any pangs of remorse for the crimes they have committed because they are asocial nihilists; but normally people who wrongly place their trust in evil values are affected in a particular way: acting on the basis of evil values has a particular effect on the perpetrators. If one acts badly (e.g., dishonestly, fraudulently, etc.) towards others, then theoretically one can suddenly no longer trust anyone else, as the possibility they will act in the same way has become more palpable, more likely. The result of this cause and effect is uncertainty and fear. This will be discussed in greater detail in the fifth chapter under "Freedom," as this is precisely what the result of committing evil is, for the normal person: fear and a corresponding loss of freedom, as his actions are now dictated by fear rather than being conclusions of free

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[104] Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 111.

choice. The psychologists of the Self-Actualization school are proponents of this line of thought: when one commits a wicked act, one must cover it up and is therefore constantly fearful that it will be uncovered or discovered. This covered-up issue then begins to control the person, and he has lost freedom of action in this way. *Frank der Fünfte* is the best work illustrating this sequence of fear's cause and effect. Management cannot trust its own employees because the workers are continually trying to steal from the bank; everyone's values consist of his own material advancement at the cost of others.

Thus, effectively, having *Vertrauen* in evil values leads to *Misstrauen* as far as one's fellow man goes; putting *Vertrauen* in evil people means being involved in the destruction they cause. It becomes obvious that one must be very careful with the trust one gives other people: which people should one trust? And one must be careful about the manner in which one trusts: how does one trust? As has been shown, because of the prevalence of evil in the world, one can be in great danger if one is not discriminating with one's *Vertrauen*.

IV. *Vertrauen* in Modern Times

A. Today's Values

This chapter will examine the nature and consequences of three important values in which, according to Dürrenmatt, people today place their *Vertrauen*. These values are technology, materialism and power. Their essences, as well as the reasons for their becoming so important in modern man's mind, will be explored; the effects that one's *Vertrauen* in them have in one's daily and future lives will be delineated; and Dürrenmatt's attitudes towards these new values will surface during the study of them. It will gradually become obvious that modern man's *Vertrauen* in these new values, much like that type of *Vertrauen* labelled "blind" in this thesis, is detrimental to his further development and has serious consequences for his life. In the second part of this chapter, Dürrenmatt's criticism of Western society, based on a criticism of its prevailing current values, will be explored.

Vertrauen in Technology

It is interesting to examine the nature of the trust in this relatively modern value, as espoused by the overwhelming majority of people in Western industrialized society.'[8]

'[8] It has been pointed out that Dürrenmatt's entire early prose depicts either ancient or surrealistic worlds, whereas starting with *Der Tunnel*, the prose works subsequently take place exclusively in modern, technologically advanced surroundings. See Leo Wilhelm Berg, *Die Bildlichkeit und*

[105] It is *Vertrauen* deeply entrenched in modern man, so deeply that he is largely unconscious of its very existence, just as he is unconscious of how firmly technology and its workings and effects form the basis for modern daily life. Man simply trusts that the perpetually continuous functioning of the machines surrounding him will not fail him--to state the phenomenon as such is actually inaccurate, for it implies an awareness on the part of the individual which does not exist.

When something happens and a mechanical breakdown does occur, man is suddenly made aware of the technology which he generally takes for granted. In addition, the average person is usually helpless to repair the breakdown, being unfamiliar with working parts and principles. If a mishap occurs, he must rely on specialists'[106] to solve the problem, as technology has spread and developed to such a point, just like medicine, that it simply comprises too great a bulk of knowledge for one person to handle. This is why professional *Vertrauen* is unavoidable in today's society. It becomes evident that man's trust in technology is again a blind one; for he is extremely dependent on it, without ever thinking about it, in order for his everyday life to run smoothly.

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[105](cont'd)*Symbolik Friedrich Dürrenmatts*, Diss. University of California, Riverside 1971, p. 38.

[106] Just after the breakdown of his car, Traps in *Die Panne* thinks ruefully: "Garagisten ist man ausgeliefert wie einst Raubrittern, noch früher Ortsgöttern und Dämonen." Dürrenmatt, *Die Panne*, p. 16.

But an unpleasant side-effect of this kind of trust has already been noted, namely less individual control over matters of individual concern. Man

> benutzt das Telefon, das Radio, das Fernsehen, [...] usw., ohne sie wirklich zu verstehen; die Wissenschaftler und Techniker, die etwas davon verstehen, kommen ihm wie Medizinmänner vor, die geheime Kenntnisse besitzen, mit denen sie seine Welt beherrschen.'[87]

Man's trust in technology is blind because of his lack of control and concern over it.

Machinery ususally functions properly; therefore man believes it to be fail-safe and trusts it at all times. The events of the story *Der Tunnel* portray this attitude clearly:

> Der Reisezug ist gewohnt, weil er sicher ist; die umständliche Auskunft des Schaffners über Reiseweg und Reisezeiten [...] wirkt wie eine Beschwörung dieser technischen Sicherheit und Verlässlichkeit. Und was den Tunnel anlangt, gibt es ebensowenig Zweifel oder Unsicherheit. Die Statistik beweist es.'[88]

In fact, the conductor epitomizes man's unquestioning blind faith in his technological inventions:

> Der Schaffner ist von dem Glauben nicht abzubringen, dass der Zug--Tunnel hin oder her--zur gewohnten Zeit in Olten ankommen werde.'[89]

This unshakable trust is also demonstrated by the rest of the passengers, who, but for one exception (the student) ignore the unusual events happening, i.e., the tunnel

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[87] Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 91.
[88] Johannes Wirsching, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt: Der Tunnel. Eine theologische Analyse," *Der Deutschunterricht*, 25, no. 1 (1973), p. 106.
[89] Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 18.

through which the train is passing being endless, and the train accelerating towards the center of the earth. The train symbolizes the nature of modern man's existence and even demonstrates technology's drawbacks:

> Der führerlose Zug, dessen Hebel versagen, kann als Symbol 'für die Gefährdung der Welt, durch die Technisierung' [...] verstanden werden. Die Tunnelfahrt [...] zeigt das Chaos unserer Welt, deren Menschen trotz ihrer räumlichen Verbundenheit kontaktarm sind.'[10]

Traps, the protagonist of *Die Panne*, is already looking forward to returning home shortly, implicitly taking for granted that his car will, of course, get him there, when the vehicle takes him by surprise and breaks down:

> Es ging einfach nicht mehr. Hilflos lag die rotlackierte Maschine am Fusse eines kleineren Hügels, über den sich die Strasse spann.'[11]

It is interesting to note that the adjective 'helpless' is applied specifically to the car and not to the driver; the relationship of the latter to the former is so close that the two are almost synonymous. The car is commonly considered by psychologists to be an extension of the self, so extensively has technology invaded our lives. The same insidious linkage between man and his technology is evident in *Der Tunnel*:

> Statistik also und Fahrplan, das heisst mathematische und technische Zuverlässigkeit bestimmen das Alltagsurteil der Menschen. Das Wagnis eigener Beobachtung und persönlicher Entscheidung haben sie sich längst von vorfabrizierten

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[10] Berg, *Die Bildlichkeit und Symbolik*, pp. 50-51.
[11] Dürrenmatt, *Die Panne*, p. 15.

Meinungsmustern abnehmen lassen. '[12]

Further implications of this blind trust in technology, as well as in other values popular in our time, will be left for discussion later. Suffice it to say that man's absolute trust in something which is, contrary to his belief, fallible, leaves him totally unprepared to act on his own when the need arises. The purpose of these two stories, portraying man being let down by technology, is to show that this blind *Vertrauen* is unjustified and indeed dangerous, as one is easily lulled into complacency.

Now that the nature of man's *Vertrauen* in technology has been investigated, a possible reason for the existence and prevalence of the high estimation of this value will be suggested. Man has evolved to a high level of intelligence, furnishing him with the brainpower to develop all kinds of advanced technological innovations. However, a problem has arisen with this intelligence; Dürrenmatt names it

> die demiurgische Fähigkeit des Menschen, immer neue Dinge zu erzeugen, die Naturkräfte in seinen Dienst zu spannen, ja die Natur selbst umzubauen, macht [...] seine Umwelt [...] kompliziert und unübersichtlich.'[13]

To compound this previously-mentioned problem of over-complication is the fact that although man is very intelligent as far as the technical aspect of life is concerned, he seems to have trouble controlling his very human nature. We have already seen how he is inclined to adopt a blind trust, rather than a more rational and

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[12] Wirschung, "Der Tunnel," p. 106.
[13] Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 28.

critical one, and tends to avoid personal responsibility, which will be further illustrated by Dürrenmatt's works later.'''[4]

'''[4] There is an intriguing theory by one of the foremost present-day thinkers which offers an unusual but credible reason for man's great capabilities in the field of technology, and his great problems of lack of control in emotional areas. The author of this theory, explained in his book *Janus. The Summing Up.* (London: Hutchison & Co., 1978, p. 5ff.) is Arthur Koestler. He claims that during the most recent explosive phases of evolution, where man was catapulted from the ape stage to the homo sapiens stage, something went wrong. The main symptom is the following: "There is the striking disparity [...] between the growth-curves of science and technology on the one hand and of ethical conduct on the other; or to put it differently, between the powers of the intellect when applied to mastering the environment and its inability to maintain harmonious relationships within the family, the nation and the species at large." (Ibid., p. 7.) The evolution of man has actually been far more one-sided than we would care to admit: "What we call human progress is a purely intellectual affair ... not much development, however, is seen on the moral side." (Von Bertalanffy, cit. by Koestler, *Janus*, p. 8.) Man is emotionally still very immature, and thus has difficulty in coping responsibly with the technological innovations he himself produces. Dürrenmatt portrays man in *Die Panne* and *Der Tunnel* as well as elsewhere as making use of technology without understanding it, and becoming too uncritical, too dependent on it. According to Koestler, the reason for this radically unequal development in man's faculties, termed the "neurophysiological hypothesis" by its author, is as follows: "The theory is based on the fundamental differences in anatomy and function between the archaic functions of the brain which man shares with the reptiles and lower mammals, and the specifically human neocortex, which evolution superimposed on them--without, however, ensuring adequate coordination." (Ibid., p. 9.) Koestler further explains the implications of the unequal development of the two different brain areas: "While the antidiluvian structures at the very core of our brain, which controls instincts, passions and biological drives, have been hardly touched by the nimble fingers of evolution, the neocortex of the hominids expanded in the last half a million years at an explosive speed which is without precedent in the history of evolution. (Ibid., p. 10.) The result of this is "the chronic conflict between rational thought and irrational beliefs." (Ibid., p. 11.) This leads to "**insufficient coordination** between the new brain [i.e., the neo-cortex] and the old, and **inadequate control** of the

'''[4] Bearing Koestler's interesting ideas in mind (his theory will perhaps be proved scientifically correct some day) some results of modern man's extensive *Vertrauen* in his technology will be examined.

Firstly, because advanced technology underlies all facets of daily life nowadays, and because man so unquestioningly trusts in its workings without understanding it explicitly, technology itself threatens to take control of man's world to the same degree that he gradually surrenders his control to machines and becomes alienated from nature. This is a theme vitally important in the 2oth century, already dominant in Kafka's works, for instance in his short stories "In der Strafkolonie" and "Ein Landarzt." Traps' car is of great value to him as a status symbol, but he does not comprehend its functioning. For modern man, every apparatus has become so complex that it resembles the 'black box' of science, which is an invention constructed so that it functions, but no-one understands completely how or why. The attitude is one of merely being appreciative of the fact that it functions, and not worrying about how it works. The direct effect of this situation on man is an emotional one, a feeling of helplessness:

'''[4](cont'd)former over the latter." (Ibid.) This is a very significant idea in explaining man's simultaneously sophisticated and primitive existence, a being half-way between the animal world and a world of perfect reason and rationality. His "human nature," paradoxically, seems to be literally and physically that of an animal.

> Die Verfügungsgewalt über die Technik droht ihm aus der Hand zu gleiten, die Technik verselbständigt sich und steht ihm als bedrohliches Phänomen gegenüber. Von einer sich ständig ausdehnenden Technisierung wird auch der persönliche Lebensraum des Menschen erfasst. Die Umwelt wird dem Menschen fremd, ihr kompliziertes Funktionieren ist für ihn undurchsichtig, er fühlt sich in die Anonymität gestossen.'''

In other words, technology complicates the world while supposedly making life simpler and easier for man, and makes him dependent on it. The passengers of the surrealistic train in *Der Tunnel*, being actually enclosed in the machine, are as physically dependent as man can get on technology to get them safely to their destination. However, when it fails, nothing can help them, not even the administrators of the machine, who are reduced to a "sinnlos funktionierende Bürokratie inmitten eines apokalyptischen Geschehens."''' Thus man forfeits control over his own fate, as well as in simple everyday life, the more importance technology gains.

Increasing technology, where the emphasis is on the purely mechanical, leads inexorably to decreasing humanism. Dürrenmatt is of the opinion that this development leads to the gradual downfall of mankind. Technology and humanism are two diametrically opposed factors, one emphasizing machinery and its development, the other man and his welfare. Dürrenmatt is not impressed with man's technological feat of having reached the moon; he decries it as "nichts [...] als eine Flucht von der Erde und damit eine Flucht vor dem

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''' Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 11.
''' Brock-Sulzer, *Stationen seines Werkes*, p. 338.

Menschen."[17] Using images strongly reminiscent of Koestler's theories, Dürrenmatt describes how a *bel esprit* (who would largely share the same interests as a humanitarian) would react to technological advances:

> Da die Naturwissenschaften immer noch unter ihrem Denkniveau liegen, bestaunen sie [d.h., die Schöngeister] die Technik wie Neanderthaler ein Fahrrad bestaunen würden: Sie beten sie an.[18]

If the emotional part of the brain is developed far less than the part which conceives these mechanical accomplishments, it will not be equipped to place the inventions, mere machines, in their proper perspectives but will rather be inclined to respond with child-like awe, overrating their worth, as Dürrenmatt points out. Thus, the trend is to value objects gradually higher than people:

> Wie abgeschmackt diese technisch durchrationalisierte Welt ist, zeigt sich jedoch mehr noch als in ihrem banalen Erscheinungsbilde an einem eigentümlichen Normenverlust. Was ist in dieser Welt wichtig? Die Masstäbe sind verdreht; das Unwichtige ist wichtig geworden.[19]

This tendency is obvious in *Der Tunnel*, where the smoking of cigarets and cigars, as well as the passage of time, are described in the smallest detail. This is the effect of technologization on social values: man becomes less important.

Worse than that, the dehumanization of today's world also affects man's interpersonal relations:

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[17] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Dramaturgisches und Kritisches* (Zürich: Arche, 1972), p. 10.
[18] Dürrenmatt, *Dramaturgisches und Kritisches*, p. 14.
[19] Wirsching, "Der Tunnel," p. 107.

> Hat nicht die moderne Gesellschaft längst zu einer zivilisierten Wildnis geführt, der gegenüber sich der Mensch wie ein Unmensch verhält?'[120]

This query describes the business world of Alfredo Traps perfectly, the so-called 'dog eat dog' world; Traps has killed in order to survive and advance, his actions embodying the law of the jungle.'[121] The popular descriptive phrase applying to today's large cities, "concrete jungles," has been created for just such reasons. This primitive behavior is doubtless partially a result of the under-developed moral-instinctual brain; it is definitely also a result of technology indirectly causing overpopulation, at least furthering it. Documented scientific evidence proves that overcrowding causes stress, which in turn provokes aggressive and hostile behavior. This has been observed in animals ranging from rats to humans. Revolutionary and ever-increasing medical knowledge, technology and care have significantly prolonged the life-span as well as the reproductive period, which all contributes to bring about an "Explosion ins Milliarden hafte" of people, to use Dürrenmatt's words. He mentions it again and again as being a pressing problem with serious ramifications: "The postwar individuals are [...] powerless in the middle of a mankind grown into thousands of millions."[122] The world is becoming too depersonalized, individuals vanishing in anonymity. This makes it firstly necessary to fight for survival, as the

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[120] Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 91.
[121] De Schangnau feels like a concealed prey, to be hunted and captured at any minute.
[122] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 219.

competition is greatly increased, and secondly easier to fight one's fellow man, because he is no longer viewed as an individual by his adversary, merely as another face in the crowd.

Thirdly, technological advancement in Western society contributes in one final important way to man's increasing alienation. It lessens the work load placed on the workers, providing more leisure time, simultaneously developing new innovations in material comfort. All this leads to a more self-centered, comfort-oriented enjoyment of leisure time; in a word, to a tendency towards egotism. This again separates man from his fellow man, as he becomes more preoccupied with the now-effective realization of his own physical self-comfort. The topic of materialism merits a more detailed discussion below.

Thus it is clear that man's *Vertrauen* in technology is of too uncritical a nature, and that in addition it carries with it serious side-effects extremely detrimental to man's long-term well-being. Of course, advancing technology carries great benefits with it also, such as the alleviation of disease and the increase in the quality of life, but there is no denying the concurrent dangers. Man must make use of technology in a very responsible manner; and the question is, can he?

Materialism

Glimpses or even portraits of characters whose main value in life is materialism are seen very frequently in

Dürrenmatt's works. Dürrenmatt sees materialism mainly in a negative light, because it stands in the way of humanism. Material things are valued more highly than humanistic virtues, at the cost of man himself. Like *Vertrauen* in technology, *Vertrauen* in materialism could do a lot of good for needy people if employed responsibly and in moderation. However, there is something in man's nature which makes it exceedingly difficult for him to withstand the temptation of wealth and remain within reasonable bounds as far as the desire for more is concerned. The results of excessive *Vertrauen* in materialism form the most consequential aspect of the topic, but a few major examples of this kind of trust should be mentioned first.

The core theme of Dürrenmatt's play *Der Besuch der alten Dame* portrays the entire population of a town gradually succumbing to the insidious desire for more and more wealth, because the highest value which they revere is materialism. The townspeople cannot resist the deplorable temptation of sacrificing a human being for the sake of wealth, ostensibly by reason of the very characteristics they themselves possess, namely lack of responsibility and lack of compassion and esteem for fellow human beings. For these are the reasons why Ill denied being the father of Claire's illegitimate child many years ago: he refused to shoulder the responsibilty, and was cold-hearted enough to turn Claire away and devious enough to resort to bribery and lies in order to do so. What makes the townspeople's actions

even more despicable is the fact that they cloak their greed for material wealth in a hypocritical mantle of respectability by claiming that they are executing Ill solely in the interests of justice:

> What transpires in Güllen is the emergence of a societal ethic which gives material values priority over human values, while still paying lipservice to the deals on which society is structured, and which in the end precipitates the breaking down of society.'[123]

Syberberg suggests that this desire for wealth and comfort may exist directly within man's nature, which possibly explains the insidiously firm hold this value seems to have over most people:

> Die ethische Verschuldung der Güllner ist daher die Konsequenz einer menschlichen Anlage, nicht die einer moralischen Entscheidung, die aus freiem Entschluss zum Mord bewusst entstand. Die Schuld am Mord entwickelt sich aus der Auswegslosigkeit eines schicksalhaften Zwanges, der sich aus der Schwäche des Menschen erklärt.'[124]

This hypothesis seems too pat an answer. It is certainly likely that the problem does lie directly within man's nature, rendering this negative quality exceedingly difficult to combat; but one should not use this as an easy

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[123] R. W. Beckmeier, *Dürrenmatt and the Detective Novel: Commitment and Responsibility*, Diss. New York Univeristy 1973, p. 76. Perhaps the Gülleners have, at the end of the play, even superficially convinced themselves of the supposed morality of Ill's execution, for "man ist wirklich zum Mord entschlossen: um des Geldes willen, obwohl man beteuert: um der Humanität willen, in deren Namen doch vorher gerade das Ansinnen entrüstet abgelehnt wurde. So posiert der Mord als höchste Moral." Karl Guthke, *Geschichte und Poetik der deutschen Tragikomödie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1961), p. 387.

[124] Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, *Interpretationen zum Drama Friedrich Dürrenmatts* (München: UNI-Druck, 1965), pp. 7-8.

excuse for this kind of behavior, as Syberberg seems to do. He states that the Gülleners' fate was unavoidable, whereas Dürrenmatt maintains that one always has the freedom to make the moral choice, to shoulder one's personal responsibility if one wishes--and so one should. This, then, is the classic portrait of man's *Vertrauen* in materialism, with the two typical accompanying characteristics: it reigns at the expense of one's fellow man, and its existence is either denied or camouflaged. Man does not like to admit that he is willing to take advantage of his fellow man to further his own material gain.

Materialism as an all-important value is also evident in several of Dürrenmatt's prose works. It has already been briefly mentioned in connection with the topic of professional *Vertrauen*, providing the motivation for the rich patients in the Sonnenberg clinic to submit to operations without anaesthesia. This shows to what extremes people are willing to go in order to avoid parting prematurely with their wealth. In his novel *Der Verdacht*, Dürrenmatt emphasizes that it is the rich who consent to such gruesome operations: "Dürrenmatt malt die Klinik ausdrücklich als eine Hölle der Reichen und Mächtigen."[128] The *Vertrauen* in and lust after materialism is so strong for them that they will do anything to fulfill it. The tale *Die Panne* depicts even more extensively how materialism comprises the foundation for the *Vertrauen* of the vast

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[128] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 396.

majority of business people. In fact, they actually base their business dealings and code of "ethics" on this *Vertrauen*:

> It is emphasized that Traps is an average citizen of our civilization, no better and no worse than others engaged in the struggle for prosperity. [...] The coercive power of economic considerations always overrides the other forces of society. The struggle for economic survival, like that for political power, knows no mercy and in practice recognizes no moral concerns.'[126]

As already indicated, the consequences of man's over-valuing this principle are overwhelmingly negative and extremely far-reaching. One of the very first stories that Dürrenmatt wrote, *Das Bild des Sisyphos*, depicts the debilitating effects of excessive *Vertrauen* in materialism. Rotmantel and his adversary, the banker, engage in a financial struggle, each trying to retain possession of the fake painting which Rotmantel himself forged. Rotmantel amassed a huge fortune before the banker bought it, which demonstrates that money was not unimportant to him. He was evidently quite impoverished prior to selling the painting,'[127] so that the painting paved the way for his acquisition of great material fortune. The banker, by virtue of his very profession, obviously subscribes to the value of materialism. However, this economic battle between the two opponents ruins both; all was in vain, as the title implies:

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[126] Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 104.
[127] Dürrenmatt, *Die Stadt*, p. 45.

> Der 'unglückliche' Bankier wird 'in bitterster Armut' sterben (41); dem Industriellen[128] wird sein letztes Hab und Gut gepfändet, auch sein Bild, und er endet auf eine jämmerliche, sinnlose, entsetzliche Weise. So sieht Dürrenmatt das Wesen des Geschäftslebens.'[129]

The Gülleners' strong belief in materialism leads them into moral transgression, since money and not morality is their prime concern. Claire Zachanassian has a sound knowledge of human nature; she knows that her money can buy her justice from the townspeople. Of course, the result of money's exaggerated importance is that people subsequently ignore and corrupt every other existing principle in order to aid their acquisition of riches. *Der Besuch der alten Dame* illustrates

> the demonic power of money to pervert justice and undermine the moral fiber of a social organization. [...] The inability of man to cling to his ideals in the face of economic pressure is a central motif in the play.'[130]

In this way, *Vertrauen* in materialism leads to the breakdown of morality, when it is the value pursued in the name of more upright, humanistic values:

> Words are thus emptied of any meaning, values are distorted, and, with the dissolution of any absolutes, moral chaos results.'[131]

As well as Dürrenmatt's play illustrating the moral decay which *Vertrauen* in materialism promotes as far as

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[128] One wonders why Peter Spycher calls Rotmantel an "Industrieller;" in the text, (*Die Stadt*, pp. 45-46) it is presumed that first and foremost he "sei in seiner Jugend ein Kunstmaler von nicht unbedeutendem Talent gewesen." Ibid.

[129] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 61.

[130] Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 55.

[131] Peter J. Graves, "Disclaimers and Paradoxes in Dürrenmatt," *German Life and Letters*, 27 (1973-4), p. 138.

behavior towards one's fellow man is concerned, two of his prose works, *Grieche sucht Griechin* and *Die Panne* accomplish the same by portraying the immorality of today's business world, the result of modern man's preoccupation with profit. In both stories it is shown how amoral the large companies for which Archilochos and Traps work really are, not only in the way management treats the employees (in *Grieche sucht Griechin* they are assigned and called solely by number) and in the way the employees treat each other (witness Traps murdering his boss in order to advance professionally,) but also in the very products which they produce. Archilochos' company, Petit-Paysan's factory, paradoxically produces both atomic cannons and forceps to aid in childbirth; Traps' company manufactures a synthetic material with both humanitarian and military uses.'[132]

The callous behavior of the employees in Archilochos' company towards one another is documented. Dürrenmatt satirizes capitalism, whose basic precept is *Vertrauen* in materialism, in this portrait of the company and workers:

> In der Machtpyramide des unmenschlich rationalisierten und dennoch labyrinthischen Verwaltungsbetriebs der Fabrik wird nach oben gedrückt, nach den Seiten geboxt, nach unten getreten.'[133]

Again, anonymity facilitates immorality, for one is not injuring an individual but rather a face in the crowd. This, along with the fact that money has become the prime

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[132] Spycher, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, pp. 235-236.
[133] Ibid., p. 209.

motivating force in Western society, leads to this criminal situation which in fact is no longer considered criminal but the norm. However, this situation is still criminal by moral standards. *Der Besuch der alten Dame* "wird zum Gericht über den gewöhnlichen schwachen Menschen und seine notwendige Verschuldung in der Welt." [134] Again, we agree with Syberberg's basic idea except for his choice of the word "notwendig." The crime consists of the fact that although man may have the inclination to value materialism overly much, he does not feel like opposing this inclination and choosing the moral instead of the comfortable.

An interesting point regarding the concept of a crowd of people following a 'norm' accepted by them and becoming collectively guilty is that this constellation was used previously by Dürrenmatt, years before he wrote his famous play about the Gülleners. A strikingly similar scene and concept occurs in the short story *Pilatus* where a huge mob is gathered around Jesus, and everyone participates in his torture: "Die Menge der Menschen wurde an Gott schuldig." [135] When Dürrenmatt depicts the violent mob screaming for Barrabas and rejecting Jesus, it is prophetic of the Gülleners choosing Claire's money and thus opting for Ill's death, although the latter more mature scene is, of course, much more refined and not so violent. But the principle is the same in both cases--the crowd chooses the wrong value

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[134] Syberberg, *Interpretationen zum Drama*, p. 9.
[135] Berg, *Die Bildlichkeit und Symbolik*, p. 32.

and becomes morally guilty:

> Das Bild, das Dürrenmatt hier [in *Pilatus*] zeichnete ist das drohende Antlitz der Menschen, die den Gott verspotteten und quälten. Es ist das Gesicht derjenigen, die den Tod des Gottes, also der Wahrheit, forderten, während sie das Leben des Verbrechers Barabas, und damit die Gewalt, verschonen wollten.'[134]

The Güllener want to murder morality and responsibility in the figure of Ill, which is what he has evolved to, in order to gain the riches promised them. This is the sorry outcome of *Vertrauen* in materialism, as it exists in society today.

There are, at least, two prominent examples in Dürrenmatt's works representing counterparts or antitypes to all characters explored above, who were without exception mired in materialism. Both examples are representatives of people who have found, either by choice or out of necessity, freedom from materialism; they have no *Vertrauen* in it, no use for it at all because they have recognized the adverse effects this belief has on mankind. These figures are free from desire for material gain. One such character is the beggar Akki in the play *Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon*. He is contrasted with the Babylonians who, as if ancestors of the Gülleners, have adopted materialism as their highest value:

> Der Gier nach Besitz und Grösse ist es auch, die sie [d.h.,die Babylonier] blind sein lässt für den Augenblick und es ihnen verwehrt, die Gnade überhaupt zu erkennen. [...] Akki steht als einzelner ausserhalb der Masse, die sich wie Marionetten durch die Vorschriften Nebuchadnezars bewegen und lenken lässt. Die Armut macht ihn frei,

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[134] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

dem Augenblick zu vertrauen.'[37]

In other words, one beneficial result of being freed from the perpetual search to increase one's possessions, which comprises *Vertrauen* in materialism, is that one becomes free to enjoy other things. Again, as was Güllen's case, a whole town (Babylon) of people is acting with *Vertrauen* in the same value, with just one exception: Akki, Ill's ancestor (although it takes the latter a long time to dissociate himself from his fellow townspeople and take the initiative in making moral decisions.) Akki, though a beggar, each evening actually throws out the booty which he has acquired during the day by begging-- he tosses jewelry, pearls and gold into the river:

> In this way he fights against materialism and constantly maintains his spiritual freedom. The individual cannot serve two masters. Wealth diverts attention from salvation and thus restricts one's freedom of belief. Akki's begging is a continuous war against the persistent threat of materialism.'[38]

Holzapfel views Dürrenmatt's works in a strictly Christian light, which is too narrow a viewpoint; if one considers them in a broader humanistic sense, substituting the word 'morality' for "salvation," the same holds true.

The ideal counterpart to modern society where materialism comes first, would be one where *Vertrauen* in materialism does not exist and humanistic values come first. Dürrenmatt has conceived of just such an ideal society in his radio play *Das Unternehmen der Wega*. The colonists on

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[37] Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 49.
[38] Holzapfel, *Three Facets of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Drama*, p. 104.

Venus have rediscovered

> the basic, human values that had been obscured or destroyed by the follies of a civilization dedicated to material and technical progress.'[13]

It is significant to note, however, that the colonists did not **choose** to live in this fashion; firstly, they were condemned to Venus, and secondly, if they would not live in this way they would not survive, for living conditions on the planet are so abysmal that they must put each other's survival first or die. If Dürrenmatt is suggesting that the kind of society portrayed in *Das Unternehmen der Wega*, with its humanistic values functioning perfectly despite man's nature as explained above, is possible on Earth, this would seem a bit naive. Dürrenmatt at least portrayed such a humanistic society, existing in an environmentally inhuman world; but does that signify that we, living in a most likely perpetually comfortable world, are doomed to living in a perpetually anti-humanistic society?

Vertrauen in Power

a. Power in General

The third primary value that people today place their *Vertrauen* in is power, i.e., power to control people and events. Because material wealth is such a highly-esteemed value for most people in any society, money is one way of obtaining and wielding power over people since they respect the rich, as was seen in the case of Claire Zachanassian. She owed her control over

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[13] Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 100.

the whole town of Güllen mainly to her millions (and to her knowledge of human nature as well). As was the case with the values of technology and materialism, power can be either beneficial or destructive, depending on how it is used. However, this is not the main issue, in Dürrenmatt's view. According to him, the question is far more fundamental than that: is it even possible for man, either as an individual or as a group, to possess power at all? Several examples of supposedly power-wielding characters in his works will be considered briefly, then two different kinds of power--individual power (*Vertrauen* in oneself) and political power (*Vertrauen* in collective bodies)--will be examined for their effectiveness. Finally, Dürrenmatt's basic idea, that man's power or control over events ranges from the severely limited to the non-existent, will be explored; and two possible solutions that he suggests for this situation of near-total helplessness will be put forward.

On the surface it would seem that power is as attainable as it ever was, and in fact it seems to be a very important factor in today's world:

> In this imperfect world, power is everything. There are only two great divisions of mankind: those having power, and their victims. Freedom, equality, virtue, honor, principle are all empty and meaningless terms without content.'[46]

It has been noted before that when a particular value

'[46] Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 93.

such as technology or materialism becomes too important, humanistic values suffer. It has also been recognized above that man is gradually losing control over his own world because of technology's increasing domination and determination of his world, and because of the population explosion, making individual relationships far more difficult to establish and maintain. Due to this creeping loss of control which every man instinctively feels, having a sense of power becomes vital in order to counter-act ensuing feelings of helplessness. This is why modern man is so willing and anxious to gain power, and why he values it so highly. The first portrait of a megalomaniac to be found in Dürrenmatt's works is that of the theater manager in *Der Theaterdirektor*. It turns out

> dass ihm von Anfang an das Theater nur als Mittel diente, jene Macht zu erlangen, die sich später als eine rohe Herrschaft der schrecklichen Gewalt enthüllen sollte.'[4]

A later character in Dürrenmatt's works, also driven by this grasping need for power, is the mad director of the insane asylum in the play *Die Physiker*, Dr. Mathilde von Zahnd. The driving force which motivates her is ambition and great desire to conquer and hold power over the whole world. It is significant that at the end of the play, she is well on her way to reaching her goal of subjugating the world to her will,

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'[4] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Der Theaterdirektor," in *Die Stadt* (Zürich: Arche, 1952), p. 60.

as she now possesses the plans for the world's first atomic bomb, which she stole from the hapless Möbius. However, the most important fact to bear in mind is that it was pure chance which delivered this power into her hands: it was totally by chance that Möbius was committed to the insane asylum which happened to be under her direction. Therefore, if *Zufall* provided her with great power in one moment, it could logically snatch it away from her again at any moment, rendering her relatively powerless once more.

Two of Dürrenmatt's works have power as their central theme: *Der Sturz* depicts a deadly serious power struggle, and *Die Frist*, Dürrenmatt's newest play, does the same in a more light-hearted vein and with a broader view. *Der Sturz* concentrates on the political and personal survival aspects of a power survival, while *Die Frist* deals with political and social power struggles, including much satire of such modern social issues as women's liberation, television's popularity, etc.

Another example of a character wishing to wield supreme personal power again, over what was at that time the whole world--the Roman Empire--is Romulus. However, he is not a megalomaniac like Mathilde von Zahnd, for power is not his explicit goal. He uses the power vested in him as emperor of Rome to surrender the empire to invading barbarians, his aim being to annihilate Rome for the decadent, corrupt state it has become. In other

words, he wants to use his power for a moral end, but his downfall reveals that he has taken on a task on far too grand a scale for one man. Expressed simply, he mistakenly assumes he has far more power than he actually does. In Romulus' case, his laudable motives of moral responsibility and desire for justice apparently do not justify the means, for, being a figure bearing great similarity to the later Inspector Matthäi, he presumes that one man can control events. In addition he does not take into account the fact that the chieftain Odoacker is not at all as Romulus had expected. Romulus' idea of the extent of his power proves to be mere illusion, which is exactly Dürrenmatt's contention regarding the nature of man's power.

Another example of this recurring theme in Dürrenmatt's works, power, is the notion of the game (*Spiel*). The motif of the chess game occurs in the film version of *Der Richter und sein Henker*, where the Author (played by Dürrenmatt himself in the film) is playing a game with himself when Bärlach and Tschanz arrive to pay him an investigative visit. The chess-like nature of the economic struggle between Rotmantel and the banker for the forged painting has already been mentioned, and the bet between Gastmann and Bärlach is also a game, wherein they play according to certain tacitly understood rules. The author playing chess may be taken as symbolizing the strategic moves of Bärlach's and Tschanz's, where the

former is closing in, step-by-step, on the murderer of Schmied, and where the latter is attempting to cover his tracks gradually.

This game has deadly consequences for both. Bärlach wins, but after his last gigantic meal in front of Tschanz, which serves as a final ploy to make the murderer believe in the old man's superiority by implying that Bärlach had lied about illness, he must pay with a severe decline in his already poor health. Tschanz is, of course, killed in a car accident, which was perhaps no accident at all. The bet between Bärlach and Gastmann has alarming consequences in Bärlach's eyes. He is helpless for forty years as his adversary kills innocent people according to the rules of their private challenge, and Bärlach is unable to stop him. The game ends with Gastmann's death.

The most significant point concerning this symbolic configuration is that all participants feel that they have the power to steer the game in the direction they want, that they retain control over the events which take place within the game, and that they can thereby win:

> Doch immer wieder wird der Narr zum Opfer seines Spieles, er entgleitet seiner Führung, überwältigt ihn, indem das, was Spiel sein sollte, plötzlich Wirklichkeit wird, und lässt so die menschliche Ohnmacht und das Ausgeliefertsein an irrationale Mächte deutlich

werden.'[142]

The best example of a game turning into reality is Traps' taking part in the social evening of the old judicial officials, and ending up hanging himself because he has been convinced that the rules of the game actually apply to real life--specifically to his own life:

> Ähnlich wie z.B. bei Büchner wird aus dem Spielen ein Gespieltwerden; aus der scheinbar selbstgesetzlichen Freiheit des Menschen wird, und zwar gerade durch ihre scheinbare Betätigung im Spiel Unfreiheit.'[143]

When invited to participate in the old men's game, Traps agrees in order to humour his host, feeling obligated as he accepted a hotel room gratis and does not wish to appear like a surly city-dweller. He obviously feels superior to these elderly country gentlemen who initiate the game, for he thinks to himself, upon spying all the law books on the shelves: "Was verstand so ein Studierter vom wirklichen Leben, nichts, die Gesetze waren ja danach."'[144] Traps evidently feels in control of things, and even steps into a role when being introduced to the other old men: he "spielte den Textilfachmann von Welt."'[145] In other words, he presumes himself better versed in the affairs of daily reality than these strange old figures.

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[142] Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 66.
[143] Günter Waldmann, "Dürrenmatts paradoxes Theater. Die Konödie des christlichen Glaubens," *Wirkendes Wort*, 14 (1964), p. 28.
[144] Dürrenmatt, *Die Panne*, p. 23.
[145] Ibid., p. 24.

However, he soon loses his imagined control over the way in which the game is heading, and it turns into reality for him. The supposed crime, for which he has adopted the rôle of defendent, is brought to his consciousness with the help of the retired lawyers and executioner, and he accepts the guilty verdict and consequently hangs himself. When Traps first arrives, he notices that "auf dem Lande seien eben die Sitten und Bräuche der Altvordern noch nicht ausgestorben."[44] These values are certainly not part of his value system, for he considers them old-fashioned. He possesses the modern-day business world consciousness, which dictates profit as having the highest value. At the end of the story, he has converted to the values of these old men, and goes so far as to apply them directly to his own life. He has lost at the game, and his death is the result of his now no longer considering the events a game.

b. Individual Power, Group Power

A further dimension of the theme of *Vertrauen* in power is self-confidence, for that simply means that one has faith in oneself and one's own power and effectiveness. In two early prose works of Dürrenmatt's, the protagonists believe, without actually expressing it, that they each possess enough power to reach their goals:

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[44] Dürrenmatt, *Die Panne*, p. 18.

> In dem 'Bild des Sisyphos' und dem darauffolgenden Stück 'Der Theaterdirector', [...] wird die Kunst mit dem Anspruch des Menschen auf Eigenmächtigkeit in Verbindung gebracht. Sie verfällt daher notwendig der Vernichtung, und wo sie herrscht, tötet sie alles Lebendige.'[47]

Here, art is used in the hands of Rotmantel and the theater director in their self-confident attempt to gain control over financial laws in the case of the former, and over as many people as possible, in the case of the latter.

Generally, the reason why Dürrenmatt's characters possess too much self-confidence as far as their capabilities are concerned is because they have a particular idea of what the world is like, which is usually not a realistic picture, not taking into account the chaos of the world, and giving too much credit to their own vastly limited powers. These people

> versuchen, die Welt durch einen Plan zu erfassen und sie nach diesem Konzept zu verändern. Dieses Bemühen bedeutet aber stets eine Reduktion, da die komplexe Realität durch die menschliche Logik immer nur teilweise, aber nie als Ganzes erkannt werden kann.'[48]

Human thought is inadequate in serving to understand the real chaotic nature of the world. But confidently believing their particular concept of the world to be correct, these characters attempt to accomplish overly ambitious things according to their ideals. This idea of

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[47] Karl Pestalozzi, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt," in *Deutsche Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, II, ed. Otto Mann (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1967), p. 387.
[48] Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 21.

people making themselves a picture of each other and the world is very Existentialist, very reminiscent of Sartre's philosophy.

Many characters attempt to succeed at projects that are impossible for one man to accomplish. Bärlach in *Der Richter und sein Henker* must resort to quasi-criminal means to destroy Gastmann and attain his goal of justice; and in *Der Verdacht* the deus ex machina who saves Bärlach at the last minute from death at the hands of Emmenberger, Gulliver, expressly chides the retired inspector for this: "Wir können als einzelne die Welt nicht retten ... so sollen wir die Welt nicht zu retten suchen."[149] Another figure with far too much rigid self-confidence in his methods and unwillingness to admit the possibility of failure is Matthäi:

> Matthäi lebt im Bewusstsein der intellektuellen Macht des Menschen, durch die er wie ein Techniker die Welt bezwingen will. Eine demütige Haltung ist ihm fremd.[150]

Some of the characters in Dürrenmatt's works do not misjudge merely the **extent** of their impact on the world, according to their conception of the world; they fabricate a totally false picture of the world for themselves, completely incommensurate with reality. Arnolph Archilochos is the best example of this attitude of lying to oneself. The result of all these characters having too great *Vertrauen* in themselves and their

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[149] Dürrenmatt, *Der Verdacht*, p. 155.
[150] Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 51.

powers, leading them to tackle impossible goals, given the unruly, chaotic world, is as follows:

> Im Glauben, erreichen zu können, was nicht in ihrer Macht steht, lassen sie sich auf von vornherein aussichtslosen Unternehmungen ein. Wenn ihr zwangsläufiges Scheitern schliesslich offenkundig wird, dann ist neben dem Misserfolg ihr Ruin, die 'nutzlose' ('sinnlose') Verschwendung ihrer Kräfte oder gar ihres Lebens zu beklagen.'[15]

These overly self-confident characters pay heavily for their unrealistic trust in themselves; Dürrenmatt demonstrates that reality will invariably correct their ideals, put man in his place.

Another aspect of power is its political side. This topic is far more serious in its implications, for politics always involve groups of people, not merely individuals. This represents power on a larger scale. It is a safe assumption that in our political system, modern democracy, the politicians' desire to help other people is not their primary concern: what they desire is power, preferably extended over as many terms of office as possible. If morality consists of love towards other people, then politicians are not moral, for they value power over people. The minister Diego in *Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi* is but one example of this attitude on the part of politicians:

'15' Ulrich Profitlich, "Der Zufall in den Komödien und Detektivromanen Friedrich Dürrenmatts," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 90 (1971), p. 260.

> He is the practical politician, an amoralist who knows the weaknesses of human nature and exploits it for his own advantage.'[152]

The mistrust that most people feel towards political institutions is shown by the quasi-instinctual feelings of hatred exhibited by the villagers of Mägendorf in *Das Versprechen*. The scene takes place as the police, representing the central authority'[153] are ignoring the strongly-expressed wishes of the villagers, who want to lynch the peddlar they believe to be the murderer. The villagers' mistrust toward the state is apparently a long-festering condition; they were "seit langem mit Zürich in Konflikt, 'wenn auch nicht offiziell, so doch heimlich.'"[154] They possess a "traditionellen Trotz gegen die Staatsgewalt."[155] What Dürrenmatt wishes to demonstrate with this tableau of the villagers at first refusing to accept the authority of the state's law enforcers, the police, is not only these people's mistrust of the central authority, but also the following: Matthäi

> nimmt die Bauern und Arbeiter ernst, das heisst, er anerkennt, dass das Streben nach Gerechtigkeit nicht blindlings der Bürokratie zu überlassen ist.'[156]

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[152] Holzapfel, *Three Facets of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Drama*, p. 84.

[153], Although, strictly speaking, the police in Switzerland are **not** centrally, i.e., federally, administrated. Each *Kanton* posesses its own police force. However, the *Kanton* government dictates policy for that entire area; from that point of view it can be termed the central authority.

[154] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 303.

[155] Dürrenmatt, *Das Versprechen*, p. 28.

[156] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 307.

The key word here is "blindlings," for this is Dürrenmatt's main contention: that political *Vertrauen* must not be blind. This is, of course, the same caution he recommends regarding the other types of trust discussed in this chapter.

Dürrenmatt stresses that our relationship to politics should consist of questioning and scrutiny for the best results. As an example, he cites Communism, which represents an ideology, i.e., an idea blindly trusted and touted:

> Wir können ihn [d.h., den Kommunismus] überwinden, indem wir ihn furchtlos betrachten, immer aufs neue durchdenken, seine Wahrheit von seinem Irrtum scheiden, er vermag weder uns noch sich selber furchtlos zu betrachten. Wir müssen tun, was der Kommunismus versäumt, sonst erstarren wir wie in einer Ideologie.'[57]

Political trust must be of a rational, not emotional nature, meaning it should not be simply accepted but should be constantly checked, much as a scientist might do:

> Die Freiheit des Geistes ist die noch mögliche Freiheit, die dem Menschen bleibt. [...] Durch sie wird die Politik immer wieder vom Individuellen her getestet. Sie zieht die politische Freiheit nach sich und wirft endlich die Frage nach der Kontrolle der Macht auf.'[58]

This is the ideal situation as far as the nature of man's trust in politics is concerned, however, for Dürrenmatt realizes that the tendency in man is to treat

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[57] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Mannheimer Schiller-Rede," *Akzente*, 7, no. 1, p. 21.
[58] Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, pp. 110-111.

politics in a predominantly emotional vein: "Der Mensch will eine emotionale heisse Politik, sich an ihr die Hände zu wärmen."[159]

Man treats politics as a matter of belief, i.e., irrationally instead of sensibly. The dangers inherent in such emotional politics are clear: they appeal to man's feelings and instincts, which, as has been noted, are stronger than his reasoning powers, and thus can be far more destructive. Emotions can even impair man's reasoning abilities by overriding the latter. As one example in his theoretical writings, Dürrenmatt states:

> Der Faschismus verführt, wie jedes Emotionale, zu einer heissen Politik. Das Individuum wird durch ihn zur Identifikation mit einer emotionalen Identifikation verlockt, überhaupt werden in ihm alle Emotionen frei, [...] Gefühle, die in Verbindung mit einer reinen, emotionalen, heissen Politik zerstörerisch, ja selbstmörderisch werden.[160]

Dürrenmatt does not value nationalism, for he believes that "Patriotismus macht blind."[161]

Another reason why this Swiss author considers *Vertrauen* in politics dangerous to man is again because of the population explosion. The larger and more unwieldy the population and state become, the larger and more complicated a bureaucracy is required to handle the masses of people, with the result that the administration becomes too large and top-heavy to be

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[159] Ibid., p. 87.
[160] Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, pp. 79-80.
[161] Ibid., p. 7.

effective. As a rational being, how can one have confidence in such a monstrous political body? Dürrenmatt describes it as follows:

> Je mächtiger, komplizierter und unübersichtlicher [...] eine Organisation wird, desto mehr verbraucht sie ihre Kräfte zu ihrem Gleichgewicht, desto unbeweglicher wird sie, desto ausschliesslicher sieht sie ihren Sinn in sich selbst.'[162]

These words describe exactly the situation of the administrative organ of the Secretariat in *Der Sturz*. These ministers whose duty, presumably, is to govern the country, expend all their energy attempting to survive, while the leader concentrates on channelling his efforts into retaining his position. When leaders of a country are engaged in such an all-encompassing power and survival struggle amongst themselves, how can they accomplish anything for the country? And how can people have *Vertrauen* in such a government? It is the portrait of a Secretariat which desires "lieber seine Macht aufrecht[zu]erhalten als die Gesellschaft [zu] ändern."[163]

Increase in population leads directly to an additional problem as far as government is concerned. Individuals wielding power over masses of people compose merely a small part of the machinery of government which has grown so complicated, meaning that many people are dependent on just one person. Therefore, an

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[162] Ibid., p. 107.
[163] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 349.

insignificant chance happening or accident affecting one governing person suddenly may have drastic reverberations on many other people, just as a minor technical failure can bring about total collapse in a mechanical system through a chain of events.

But also, the more people there are, the more competition is built up, necessitating anonymity if sheer numbers alone does not bring it about, because of the dangers associated with being open. One might reveal a weakness useful to another participant in the political power game, who might use it to his own advantage and correspondingly one's own demise. This whole situation seems to imply that power is larger and more powerful than man himself, as was the case with technology.

The problem of power is inherent in most of his works as a result of Dürrenmatt's view of modern man's helplessness; but only *Der Sturz* and *Die Frist* deal expressly and extensively with this topic.'[4] Also, there is only one case presented in Dürrenmatt's writings which deals positively with the theme of trust in politics, namely the radio play *Das Unternehmen der Wega*. The reason for this favorable treatment is simply that because the inhabitants of Venus trust each other implicitly, they can of course trust each other to wield

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'[4] Dürrenmatt does expound his opinions on politics in his theoretical writings, *Theater-Schriften und Reden* and *Dramaturgisches und Kritisches*.

political power in the best interests of all. Conditions here on Earth however are different from those on Dürrenmatt's fictional Venus. That is why we must be watchful of, and not trusting in, political institutions, Dürrenmatt claims.

His basic premise, concluded by observing the modern world and its conditions, is that man's power today is either extremely limited or even non-existent. It has already been shown how useless political *Vertrauen* is, given the modern-day conditions of overcrowding and over-complication. The chaotic world cannot be put in order by imposing a political system on it. It resists being changed by one or more persons, which is why the individual as well as organized groups in politics are relatively powerless to effect any change. One picture expressing this helplessness of man against the world is to be found in *Die Stadt*, where the city represents the modern world. The protagonist in the short story of the same name laments:

> Erbaut, damit wir uns selbst am Grunde der Schrecken begegnen, lehrte sie [d.h., die Stadt] mich, meine Grenze zu sehen, indem sie ihre Grösse offenbarte. Ich erfuhr meine Ohnmacht durch ihre Macht und ihre Vollkommenheit durch meine Niederlage.'[65]

Science and knowledge do not provide man with power to control the world either, as *Die Physiker* shows:

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[65] Dürrenmatt, *Die Stadt*, p. 116.

> Science has advanced so far that man cannot keep pace with it. The scientists themselves are helpless in the face of what they have discovered. What they know about nature is limited, in spite of the great advances that have been made. They know how to open Pandora's box, but are unable to cope with what flies out of it.'[16]

A final important example of man's limited power concerns the detective novels, wherein Bärlach is striving for justice and the eradication of certain evil elements. In *Der Richter und sein Henker* he becomes enmeshed in the pull of evil, and must resort to questionable means to achieve his goal; in *Der Verdacht* he would have been killed by his wicked adversary, Dr. Emmenberger, had not Gulliver the Jew stepped in at the last minute to save him and finish the job of eliminating the criminal. Bärlach could not do it by himself. In the third detective novel, Matthäi does not succeed in bringing the criminal to justice because chance intervenes, and the inspector lives out the rest of his days as a drunken degenerate. This last example is the most striking one of a man who wishes to control the world by reason, but fails and must pay bitterly with insanity.

Gontrum has extensively examined the trend of increasing ineffectuality of Dürrenmatt's protagonists.'[17] Their diminishing power and effectiveness attests to the fact that *Vertrauen* in

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[16] Holzapfel, *Three Facets of FriedrichDürrenmatt's Drama*, p. 177.
[17] Gontrum, "Ritter, Tod und Teufel," pp. 88-98.

power is useless:

> Es lässt sich feststellen, dass sowohl durch das vernünftige Handeln als auch durch das Spiel und anhand der Austauschbarkeit der Rollen des Richters und des Opfers Dürrenmatt die Bedrohung und die Ohnmacht des Menschen in einer ihn überwältigenden Wirklichkeit zeigen will.'[68]

This holds especially true for the three works mentioned above where Bärlach and Matthäi are both "Richter" as well as "Opfer." Arnolph Archilochos also is first "Opfer" of his own false perception of the world, leading to his ridicule in front of the most eminent townspeople as he flees his marriage ceremony with sudden awareness of what Chloé actually is; towards the end of the novel he becomes an avenging "Richter," like the Greek god Ares, finally throwing out his parasitic brother, entire family and cohorts. But the interchangeability of the judge and victim rôles definitely indicates the lack of power on everyone's part.

Is it possible for the individual to be effective when managing his own life and trying to overcome the chaotic forces of the world as they affect him? Furthermore, can he effect changes as an individual on society or the globe? Dürrenmatt answers this question with a bald statement: "Eine Veränderbarkeit der Welt durch den Einzelnen sei 'unrealisierbar geworden, ausser

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[68] Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 73.

Kurs gesetzt.'"[169] It is quite obvious that Dürrenmatt has no *Vertrauen* in the power of the individual. He also states this quite clearly in his logically formulated "21 Punkte zu den Physikern:"

> 17.[...] Was alle angeht, können nur alle lösen.
> 18. Jeder Versuch eines einzelnen, für sich zu lösen, was alle angeht, muss scheitern."[170]

He asserts that man as an individual completely lacks any power to influence or effect change on wordly matters:

> Nicht der Einzelne verändert die Wirklichkeit, die Wirklichkeit wird von allen verändert. Die Wirklichkeit sind wir alle, und wir sind immer nur Einzelne.'[171]

Here Dürrenmatt explains the paradox existing in the very nature of man: he is an individual, but at the same time distinctly part of a collective, namely mankind as a species. And one man has no power to accomplish anything which concerns man as the collective. Thus when Bärlach tries to fight evil, which as pointed out before exists within man, he as an individual can only accomplish a certain very limited amount. Evil will resurface repeatedly, there will always be more Emmenbergers and Gastmanns, until all people unite in fighting evil. Again, this seems to us to be a trifle naïve, this assumption on Dürrenmatt's part that it is possible for all men to unite some day

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[169] Hans Mayer, *Dürrenmatt und Frisch. Anmerkungen* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1963), p. 17.
[170] Dürrenmatt, *Theater-Schriften und Reden*, p. 194.
[171] Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 103.

in pursuing the goal of eradicating evil.

Occasionally, some of Dürrenmatt's characters attempt to wield power over events by using their reasoning faculties, stressing logic and rationality as a means to control matters. The first of Dürrenmatt's characters to try this is the guard in *Die Stadt*. While in the underground prison, and with no facts to base his ideas of reality on, he attempts to construct a true picture of the situation in which he finds himself, by using reasoning and logic. He takes stock of his physical surroundings: a niche for himself in a long tunnel of glass-like material, with identical niches at regular intervals. With this paltry and ambiguous information, the guard tries to determine whether he is, in fact, a guard or indeed a prisoner; who else, if anyone, is residing in the tunnel, etc. However, he can never truly rely on his conclusions, for they are merely speculation. With this entire scene, Dürrenmatt is demonstrating that we cannot trust our empirical knowledge and reasoning powers too much; logical thought is not sufficient in totally comprehending the world: "Unser Verstand erhellt die Welt nur notdürftig."[172]

This ineffectuality of human reasoning in the face of the chaotic world has been termed the "Ohnmacht des

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[172] Dürrenmatt, *Das Versprechen*, p. 213.

menschlichen Geistes,"[173] an astute judgement by Waldmann. Bärlach highly values reasoning and deduction, based on his extensive knowledge of human nature, to aid him in the fight against evil. But that which he values fails him time and time again. Gastmann commits countless crimes which are not based on any reasonable motives; therefore Bärlach is not able to prove, by using logic and the precepts of our system of law, which are based on reasoning, that Gastmann is the criminal. The old detective must resort to extra-legal means of permanently putting away his life-long enemy. This principle of rationality not providing man, despite his *Vertrauen* in it, with enough power and leverage to succeed in his endeavors within the chaotic world is symbolized by Bärlach's chronic sickness:

> Diese Krankheit ist auch ein Zeichen für den defekten Zustand des Detektivs, für die Unfähigkeit, sich vollständig als rationales und kalkulierendes Wesen zu verwirklichen.'[174]

It is too one-sided to rely solely on logic when dealing with a many-faceted, constantly changing world. Of course Matthäi is the ultimate example of a dangerously deficient, exclusive reliance on reason.

The crucial factor causing man's downfall if he leans too much on reason for his support is the following:

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[173] Waldmann, "Dürrenmatts paradoxes Theater," p. 30.
[174] Seifert, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 76.

> Die Diskrepanz zwischen Planen und Handeln lässt sich also durch die menschliche Fähigkeit begründen, sämtliche möglicherweise auftauchenden Zufälle und Pannen in der Idee zu berücksichtigen.[175]

Thus **chance** is the agent which determines the limits of man's power and effectiveness in a chaotic world, and shatters again and again the trust man has in his own reasoning abilities. There are countless examples of chance throwing over men's carefully-worked out plans in Dürrenmatt's works; it would probably be safe to go so far as to say that every single one of his plays and prose works, without exception, contains such incidents, either minor or major.

To name just two: Matthäi, the epitome of the reasoning man, wastes away in insane oblivion as a result of chance interfering with his flawlessly calculated plan. A second major downfall of a character depending on his reasoning power to survive comes from *Der Sturz*, wherein the leader A, perched precariously on the seat of leadership at the pinnacle of the Secretariat, is toppled by sheer chance. One of the Secretariat, O, is missing; the other members assume it is because A had him liquidated, and they accordingly unite to confront and overthrow A. Later, one finds out that O had simply erred regarding the date of the meeting. Thus chance ignited the irreversible process which led to A's destruction: "Had O not been mistaken,

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[175] Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 28.

the members of the Secretariat would not have been alarmed, or ventured to build up a common front against A."[176]

An interesting development to note, concerning the factor of chance, is that it is not so evident in his early works as in his later ones, where it becomes a dominating, determining force. What we have instead, in the earlier works, is a malicious God who steps in to thwart man's plans and actions, for instance in *Weihnacht*, *Der Folterknecht*, and *Pilatus*. Gradually, this personal, willful force of a God evolves into the impersonal element of chance, which strikes anyone and anywhere, without a plan as God supposedly has:

> Für Dürrenmatt ist also sein Motiv, das 'Dutzendgesicht' mit Schicksal aus Pech, gleichfalls nichts anderes als die menschliche Kehrseite der Absetzung und der Ersetzung Gottes durch einen mehr oder weniger bösartigen Zufall.[177]

Thus, one trend in Dürrenmatt's writings becomes obvious through this one device: he gradually moves away from a religious orientation towards a more humanistic one, shifting the emphasis from God imposing on man to man's reactions when he is adversely affected by an importune element, namely chance.

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[176] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 396.
[177] Werner Kohlschmidt, "Selbstrechenschaft und Selbstbewusstsein im Menschenbild der Gegenwartsdichtung," in *Das Menschenbild in der Dichtung*, ed. Albert Schaefer (München: Beck, 1965), p. 177.

Given that chance has such a devastating effect on man's efforts to accomplish things through planning and reasoning, what are the alternatives for him, if *Vertrauen* in collective and individual power has proven unjustified and useless? The answer is not specifically to be found in the prose works, although there are some less obvious indications; two radio plays, *Nächtliches Gespräch mit einem verachteten Menschen* and *Das Unternehmen der Wega* exhibit a possible solution most distinctly. In the former, the situation consists of a man who is suddenly visited one evening by the executioner, who enters the man's apartment, appointed to kill the man whose hour has apparently come. It appears completely incomprehensible and arbitrary that the man has been deemed to die at this moment, for he is in the prime of his life and certainly not ready to die. It is obvious that he has no power over death, however; it would be useless to have *Vertrauen* in one's own individual power in this case because death is all-powerful and inescapable. Therefore, there is only one way of acting at this moment, in the face of not being capable of influencing the event itself in the slightest: namely by adopting a certain attitude:

> Humility in death and the acceptance of one's fate even if it is an outrageously unjust one are the weapons of those who do not possess power.'[178]

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[178] Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 94.

And no man possesses power to survive in the face of death, if it is time for him to die. Peppard goes on to describe, as the executioner does to his victim, the ideal and only way to face death and even triumph over it, though one seemingly surrenders to it:

> The victim, assured of his fate, accepts his destiny and dies humbly (almost gratefully) with that serenity of soul and peace of mind which Dürrenmatt has so often portrayed as man's greatest achievement. His acceptance of death means [...] that he has triumphed in the only way that the spirit can triumph in this world.'[17]

If the victim is humble and accepts his inferiority when confronting death, the result is "the triumph of the spirit over rationality and common sense, the triviality of death and the reality of the truth which survives the death of an individual."[18] This is again a very Existentialist notion, that one should strive to die a worthy death as that is the only positive act man can make in absurd life. The Existentialists abhor the mortal body which sets limits on the human spirit. Thus by dying a dignified death, the value of the spirit is asserted above and beyond the expiration of the lowly flesh. Secondly, after death no-one can make himself a false picture of the deceased, because at that moment his ever-changing, vital image becomes *fixé*, forever unchanging. For these reasons it is important to die an honorable death.

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[17] Ibid., pp. 93-94.
[18] Ibid., p. 94.

The point is, one **must** abandon one's trust in one's own power, which has been proven illusory anyway in today's world. One is forced to recognize that there are forces more powerful than man, like fate, and accept it. Because the theme of trust in fate is so dominant in Dürrenmatt's works, it will be discussed separately below. It is easy to understand why, if one accepts a situation and gives in to it, one triumphs over it in the spirit. In the animal world when a confrontation takes place, there are only two instinctual reactions possible for the animals: fight or flight. Man is no exception to this rule. But he does have a third option, which is difficult to choose and demands much courage, for it runs counter to his instinctive reactions: namely acceptance of the adversary's (death's or fate's) superiority, and a humble surrender. This way the opponent **cannot** win, for the man has neither fought (in a fight one opponent must win and one must lose, but if death or fate is the opponent, man will always lose) nor has he fled (for if he tries to run away, he has already lost.) One rises above this confrontation if one refuses to participate by trying to exert one's puny strength. This is what Dürrenmatt means when he advocates *Vertrauen* in or_submission to fate, and decries *Vertrauen* in illusory power, demonstrating how little power man actually possesses in the modern world.

In the detective novels, Bärlach can be observed resisting man's powerlessness by never relinquishing the struggle against evil, even though he is elderly and sick. Also, he reckons with chance and does not make the fatal mistake of excluding its potential from his plans. This is shown by the fact that when Schmied, Bärlach's original helper in the struggle against Gastmann, is eliminated by Tschanz (it is coincidental and fortunate for Bärlach that Tschanz happens to have an inferiority complex because of his lack of education, and also happens to be jealous of Bärlach's handyman Schmied), Bärlach continues in his fight against Gastmann by incorporating Tschanz in his plans, adapting his method to the chance incident of Tschanz doing away with Schmied. Thus, less expressly but by example, the figure of Bärlach demonstrates the ideal way, in Dürrenmatt's view, of man coping with his powerlessness in today's world: by perpetually continuing to make an effort at accomplishing things, even though the struggle may be basically futile; by accepting fate and chance happenings and making the best of them; and not presumptuously assuming that man is powerful, but by being humble, recognizing that far more powerful elements exist, like fate, and being flexible enough to take them into account. The time-honored proverb of the giant oak tree straining to stand tall in the storm and breaking, and the reed bending in the wind and surviving

is an apt image.

B. Criticism of Society

The values discussed above are all esteemed by Western industrial society. Dürrenmatt presents them in an exclusively negative light, which clearly implies extensive criticism on his part. There are areas in his works in which his criticism of society's values, meaning generally accepted and applied values, becomes more explicit. Dürrenmatt maintains that it is detrimental to and wrong for man to trust in these values, which have unfortunately been accepted by most people. This topic will be examined in a wide perspective; then Dürrenmatt's critique of his own Swiss society will be discussed, as he frequently criticizes his own country. Finally, the general results pertaining to man in a society which holds the wrong values in esteem will be delineated.

Dürrenmatt's work is predominantly socially critical, but there are salient examples which will be either merely mentioned in support of this contention, or examined more closely. In an overall view of his works, it has become clear through the discussion of the three sample values above that Dürrenmatt is censuring the society which holds these values dear. In the novel *Der Verdacht*, many characters hold critical philosophical discussions about societal values:

> Die 'bürgerliche Weltordnung' der 'Christenheit' wird übrigens nicht nur von Bärlach angegriffen, sondern [...] auch von Gulliver und besonders von Marlok und Emmenberger. Überhaupt wird im *Verdacht*, ähnlich wie zum Beispiel in der *Ehe des Herrn Mississippi*, über gewisse mächtige Ideologien Abrechnung gehalten: nicht nur über die 'bürgerliche Weltordnung' und deren 'Christentum', sondern auch über den Nazismus, den stalinistischen Kommunismus und den materialistischen und existentialistischen Nihilismus.'[8]

The society of *Das Unternehmen der Wega* provides a model of an ideal society, with appreciation of life and one's fellow man as a consequence. By contrast, our modern, comfortable, technical world is totally lacking in such opportunities for us to experience the satisfaction in the feat of sheer survival (barring the experience of financial survival in the jungle of the business world, which is also gruelling after its own fashion.) In addition, the modern world also lures man into a state of complacency, making it far more difficult to engage in any kind of worthwhile battle, since comfort seduces to laziness.

The major figure representing societal values, and acting accordingly, is Traps; Ill follows in his footsteps. It is not Traps so much who is being criticized for his values and ensuing actions as the society which formed him:

> Darum also geht as für Dürrenmatt gar nicht um 'Schuld und Sühne' des Herrn Traps, sondern um eine Gesellschaft, die sich in Traps spiegelt und notgedrungen auch zugeben müsste, dass das Verhalten des Alfredo bei seinem Versuch, [...] auf zu steigen, durchaus den Gesetzen eines modern-kategorischen Imperativs entspricht. Was heissen soll, dass Alfredo Traps, Generalvertreter, nicht bloss so handelte, wie es den Maximen einer allgemeinen Geschäftsgesetzlichkeit entsprach,

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[8] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 179.

> sondern bei seiner Karriere auch so vorging, dass man ihn als vorbildhaft tüchtig beim Ausnutzen einer jeden Chance bezeichnen könnte.'[182]

An amusing portrait of the *petit bourgeois* is painted in the fragmentary tale *Im Coiffeurladen*, in the barbershop as the protagonist undergoes a shave and a haircut. He listens to the discourse of the barber with his other clients, patriotically and dutifully lamenting the sudden explosive demise of the town's distinguishing feature, an old landmark tower. The whole constellation of the town's officials, sitting around in the barber shop getting shaved, and gossiping about the latest news is an express caricature of the middle class and their thinking. The critique of this is very subtle on the author's part, as it is an amusing scene. But the most important point is the uniformity of the citizens' thinking; the only one who observes the goings-on objectively and with a sense of humor, in other words with some perspective, is the outsider, de Schangnau. Significantly, he is accidentally cut by the barber, impassioned in a moment of nationalistic fervour and vowing to cut the throat of the perpetrator of the tragedy (who is, ironically, the listening de Schangnau himself). In *Der Sturz*, the horrendous effects of society's over-confidence in its political system are portrayed, which include paranoia and real danger to the participants in the political game.

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[182] Mayer, *Dürrenmatt und Frisch*, p. 25.

A second aspect of Dürrenmatt's criticism of society is more specific. He aims at his homeland, poking fun at Switzerland and then going on, widening his horizon to criticize universally-held values. By inference, his critique of Swiss society also applies to other industrialized Western nations. But there are some typically Swiss features and values which he singles out to accord special treatment to, namely to parody. Switzerland is

> a country of solid and self-satisfied prosperity, of petty bourgeois, of bank and office clerks. Its vices and virtues are those of the middle-class: preference for stability and security over intellectual daring, for common sense over sensitivity, for careful handling of public and private funds over financial and spiritual encouragement to the arts and artists.'[183]

These are exactly the societal values that Dürrenmatt criticizes. He strongly advocates constantly thinking things through, critically reviewing attitudes and values which one has adopted. This is of course the opposite inclination to the sedate and settled middle class', which at all costs does not wish to disturb the status quo. This is exactly Dürrenmatt's objection to society and its values: society is far too willing to trust certain principles blindly, rather than expend the energy and effort of self-policing of values.

In *Der Richter und sein Henker*, an incident is related wherein the reason for Inspector Bärlach's premature return home, breaking off a flourishing career in Germany, is

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[183] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 11.

explained:

> Der Grund seiner Heimreise war nicht so sehr Liebe zu Bern, das er oft sein goldenes Grab nannte, sondern eine Ohrfeige gewesen, die er einem hohen Beamten der damaligen neuen deutschen Regierung gegeben hatte. In Frankfurt wurde damals über diese Gewalttätigkeit viel gesprochen, und in Bern bewertete man sie, je nach dem Stand der europäischen Politik, zuerst als empörend, dann als verurteilungswert, aber doch hoch begreiflich, und endlich sogar als die einzige für einen Schweizer mögliche Handlung; dies aber erst fünfundvierzig.'[84]

The point Dürrenmatt is making is as follows: "In indirekter Form geisselt Dürrenmatt hier die Prinzipienlosigkeit und den anpassungsbereiten Opportunismus der Politik seines Heimatlandes gegenüber dem Regime des Unrechts."'[85]

Similar to the notions and descriptions in *Die Panne* the industrial or business world and its accompanying morals are criticized by Dürrenmatt in his first detective novel. This again is criticism leveled at society, for the immoral actions of the businessmen are condoned by society. Seifert recognizes and points this out:

> Die im verborgenen stattfindenden Geschäfte der Grossindustriellen mit den Vertretern einer fremden, geheimgehaltenen Macht und die Beteiligung Krimineller wie Gastmann an diesen Geschäften könnten den Stoff für einen gesellschaftskritischen Roman hergeben. In diesem Zusammenhang passt auch, wenn von Schwendi Druck auf staatliche Stellen ausübt und sie an der gesetzlich vorgeschriebenen Verpflichtung, einen Mordfall zu klären hindert.'[86]

The industrial magnates are portrayed as lacking any human decency towards other people, just as Traps and his business colleagues are deficient. Business comes before people, and

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[84] Dürrenmatt, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 8.
[85] Seifert, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 63.
[86] Ibid.

this precept is widespread in society:

> Unmittelbar kritisch wird Dürrenmatt bei der Darstellung und Selbstdarstellung der Industriellen. Für von Schwendi zählen einzig die Geschäfte, während die Künstler lediglig als [...] Mittel der Verschleierung dienen. [...] Er ist sich der realen Macht solcher Vorstellungen in der schweizer Gesellschaft so sicher, dass er damit Druck auf Lutz ausüben kann.'[87]

The figure of the writer Fortschig in *Der Verdacht* supplies another example of criticism of society, which is so materialistically oriented that it may hypocritically praise spiritual endeavours but is not willing to support and facilitate them financially, as this 'loss' of money would entail too much sacrifice on their part:

> Als ein feuriger Humanist hatte er umsonst versucht, mit seinen die Freiheit und die Gerechtigkeit hochhaltenden Dichtungen auf das bernische und schweizerische Publikum zu wirken und sich selber damit ein menschenwürdiges Dasein zu schaffen; die Leute wollten notfalls den Geist, dem sie Lippendienst leisteten, geniessen, aber nichts dafür bezahlen.'[88]

The Swiss, like the Germans, are noted for holding such values as security, materialistic well-being, and order dear; and dislike and resist anything which might disturb this order. But this is exactly what Dürrenmatt is warning against: complacency, and the excessive insistence on order which might lead to tolerating and harboring dangerous forces. This becomes evident in *Der Verdacht*, as well as in his other detective novels, where he depicts staid, bourgeois surroundings and the people of Switzerland:

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[87] Seifert, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 65.
[88] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 172.

> There are usually some pretty gory crimes in a Dürrenmatt thriller, as there are in life; but it is notable that he sets these inside the cozily regulated world of Swiss bourgeois values. He need not, for instance, have made the concentrationcamp surgeon in *The Quarry* Swiss at all.'[9]

With this, Dürrenmatt is certainly sharply criticizing the society with values which allow such evil things to happen unchecked.

There are serious ramifications, when an entire society, i.e., the majority, condones the 'wrong' values as discussed above; these ramifications are what Dürrenmatt endeavours to bring to our consciousness with his critique of society in his works. Countless numbers of his characters merely follow the accepted tenets of their society as portrayed in the various plays and stories, even though the values of the society are wrong. This trend is very obvious in *Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon*, where but for one exception, namely Akki, everyone ascribes to the accepted morality. The members of this society place too much emphasis on preserving "the morality contained in a man-made, inflexible system of values."[10]

The identical structure of a society with poor values, but most people conforming to it nevertheless, can be seen in *Der Besuch der alten Dame*, *Die Panne*, and *Frank der Fünfte*. It is easier for an individual to follow the generally accepted rules, even if they are bad, than to utilize the freedom which every individual in the Western

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[9] Geoffry Wagner, "Dürrenmatt and the Kriminalroman," *Commonweal*, 76 (1962), p. 324.
[10] Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, p. 35.

industrial world possesses to make a responsible, individual moral choice:

> Lack of responsibility in this sense has been one of Dürrenmatt's chief criticisms of contemporary society, voiced consistently in play after play.'[1]

Again, overpopulation contributes to the problem of people blindly following standards accepted by their society; for if a large number of people espouse a certain principle, then it seems likely that they are right and that a mere individual wishing to differ is wrong, sheer weight of numbers being a convincing factor. Dürrenmatt himself expresses his ideas regarding personal guilt within the collective of the society in his theoretical writings:

> Die Tragödie setzt Schuld, Not, Mass, Übersicht, Verantwortung voraus. In der Wurstelei unseres Jahrhunderts [...] gibt es keine Schuldigen und auch keine Verantwortlichen mehr. Alle können nichts dafür und haben es nicht gewollt. [...] Wir sind zu kollektiv schuldig, zu kollektiv gebettet in die Sünden unserer Väter und Vorväter. [...]Schuld gibt es nur noch als persönliche Leistung.'[2]

In other words, men such as Alfred Ill and Alfredo Traps are typical products and members of their societies. Only when confronted by extreme situations, where they are put to the test, will it become evident just to what extent they are moral: Will they cling to their society's values and remain within the tempting safety of the mass acceptance of these values? Or will they finally reject the materialistic values which are humanistically irresponsible, standing alone and taking upon themselves the burden of

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[1] Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, p. 46.
[2] Dürrenmatt, *Theaterprobleme*, pp. 47-48.

responsibility? The Swiss society in which Bärlach lives tolerates and even protects criminals. Bärlach dedicates his life, even in his final uncertain hours, to pursuing the perpetrators of evil relentlessly, shouldering his responsibility as a moral individual and going much farther in his devotion than the police force or the whole judiciary system would ever go.

Happily, in the cases of the two figures mentioned above, they do throw over society's values which have fashioned them, and choose to accept man's responsibilities, which their own societies are avoiding. This is precisely the question Dürrenmatt poses throughout his work, starting with the radio play *Der Doppelgänger*: will an individual brave the responsibility that everyone else in general is shirking? In the radio play mentioned, Dürrenmatt demonstrates that responsibility involves everyone, and that each person should be willing to take his part upon himself. The fundamental idea that Dürrenmatt starts from is the Christian idea of man's original sin, postulating that all men are primordially guilty. As his works progressively become more humanistically-oriented, this idea of original sin evolves into a more concrete concept: namely the guilt incurred by acquiescing with the corrupt values of society and going along with them, not resisting them.

Die Panne is the most significant work to examine, as regards to an individual moulded by society and determined by its immoral values, yet in the end coming to a

realization of his responsibilities, namely to value man higher than material goods, and accepting his own personal guilt for not living up to his responsibilities. The critic Werner Kohlschmidt describes the similar figures of Traps and Max Frisch's Stiller as follows:

> geschichtlich gesehen, Kümmerformen einer grossen Tradition der Selbstrechenschaft der Beichte, der Sehnsucht nach Individualität. [...] Keiner von ihnen erwies sich als fähig, den Gedankenmord als echte Schuld zu begreifen und zu verarbeiten. [...] Zu sich selbst können sie nicht gelangen. [...] Die Konformität des zeitgenössischen Lebensbetriebes können beide nicht durchstossen.'[13]

Kohlschmidt, along with several other critics,[14] believes that it was not a rational, conscious choice of responsibility and ensuing guilt which led Traps to commit suicide at the end of the evening which had centered around his trial. These critics blame the staggering amounts of liquor consumed, as well as Traps' lack of formal education which, it is maintained, would lead to an inability on his part to distinguish art and games from reality. Perhaps the motivation for his death is not completely straight-forward. Does he fully and sincerely recognize his guilt and subsequently wish to atone for it?

What is clear is that this is an average, normal person who is not outstanding in any way, yet manages to reject his society's erroneous values and fully accept his

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[13] Kohlschmidt, "Schuldbewusstsein im Menschenbild," p. 192.

[14] To name just one: Hans Mayer's "*Die Panne* von Friedrich Dürrenmatt," in *Zur deutschen Literatur der Zeit* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rohwolt, 1967), pp. 214-223.

responsibility and its consequences. The other significant point to note is the fact that justice here, as happens on innumerable occasions in Dürrenmatt's works, is meted out extra-legally, that is, outside the normal legal channels. This is extremely significant, for it indicates that society would not judge this man as he is, in fact, acting in accordance with society's standards. Thus he can only be tried in a 'court of law' outside his own society:

> Gerade weil er offiziell nicht gerichtet wird, wird er fähig, seine Schuld nun anzunehmen. Der Richter stösst unter freudigem Schluchzen hervor, er könne den Angeklagten nur zum Tode verurteilen, weil er sich selbst als schuldig erkläre.'[''']

Thus Traps is judged not by his society's standards, but "mit dem reinen Strahl der Gerechtigkeit,"[''''] in other words, by the standard of the absolute value of justice, not the perverted standard his society espouses. Expressed succinctly, the moral standards of Western industrialized society are on trial here, as personified by Traps; and they are proclaimed guilty by Dürrenmatt.

[''']' Hans Bänzinger, "Die Gerichte und das Gericht von Alfredo Traps in einer ländlichen Villa," in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Gerhard P. Knapp (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 230.

[''''] Dürrenmatt, *Die Panne*, p. 114.

V. Religion and Faith

Religion and faith are all-pervasive themes in Dürrenmatt's works and together make up a complex concept. Under the topic of religion, people's belief or lack of it regarding God and organized religion will be examined, then religious faith as such will be explored, as it occurs in Dürrenmatt's writings. The second part of this chapter, labelled "Faith," will deal with different kinds of strictly secular beliefs espoused by various characters, or as again totally lacking where they might be appropriate. The concept of faith, both religious and secular, must be dealt with in a separate chapter as it differs from the idea of *Vertrauen* by virtue of the following: faith is a belief or a creed in which one trusts, which one holds to be true.'''' It can be considered the fundament for trust. Therefore it is worthwhile examining in its own right.

A. Religion.

Vertrauen in Religion

As a preliminary step, the broad theme of religion as it is peculiar to Dürrenmatt's ideas should be noted, as this is what the works are based on. This is difficult to

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'''' Two dictionary definitions read as follows: "die Grundbed. 'sich etw. lieb, vertraut machen;' über 'Gutheissen' wird die endgültige Bed. erreicht." (*Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 20th ed., Friedrich Kluge, Berlin: de Gruyter & Co., 1967, p. 260.) Further, it means "für lieb halten, Gutheissen [...] für wahr halten." (*Der grosse Duden*, VII, *Etymologie*, Mannheim: Dudenverlag, 1963, p. 225.)

do. Firstly, the critics offer little help, interpreting Dürrenmatt's writings either in a religious vein or not, according to the existence or absence of religious faith on their part. Secondly, Dürrenmatt's stance towards religion gradually changes, and this development is manifest in his works. However, there are certain basic facts one can ascertain pertaining to Dürrenmatt's involvement with religion. It is a well-known fact that he is the son of a Protestant minister, which he admits influenced him greatly.[1] He is a Swiss citizen, citizen of a country still steeped in the thought of Calvin and Zwingli.

The gradual change in Dürrenmatt's attitude towards religion, mentioned above, consists of a shift in focus of importance from God to man. In the early works, religion and God are of prime, central importance. Of the nine short stories contained in his first book published, *Die Stadt*, five deal expressly and mainly with God and religious faith, or lack of it,[2] and his first two and fourth plays do the same[3] After that, the emphasis gradually shifts away from God as being the direct or indirect cause of man's suffering, to man, and how he deals with the world and his

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[1] He describes precisely how he was influenced by his origins and upbringing in this regard: "Man musste diese Welt annehmen. Man war dem Glauben ausgeliefert, schutzlos und nackt." (E. Brock-Sulzer, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt in unserer Zeit*, Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, 1968, p. 12.)

[2] They are: *Weihnacht*, *Der Folterknecht*, *Der Hund*, *Der Tunnel*, *Pilatus*.

[3] Namely, *Es steht geschrieben*, *Der Blinde* and *Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon*.

own human nature. But the basic tenet of calvinistic Protestantism, which is relevant here, is that man must have absolute faith or trust in God and God's justice in order to tolerate and suffer every misfortune that comes his way. Like the Biblical Job, man will grow in stature by suffering trials and tribulations, so long as his absolute faith in God endures. Such a figure embodying this basic principle in Dürrenmatt's works is Knipperdollinck in *Es steht geschrieben*.

A second major principle of calvinistic Protestantism important for the understanding of Dürrenmatt's writings, because it appears to form the basis for them, is the concept of an unbridgeable chasm separating man and God. This is a simple concept to grasp, since man is an imperfect, finite being and God is conceived as being that which is beyond man, namely a being of perfection and infinity. Because of man's limitations, he can never understand or copy God's actions, which establishes the chasm between the two beings. Waldmann phrases it as follows:

> Die Komödie [Dürrenmatts] gründet also darin, dass angesichts der unbedingten Unverstehbarkeit des göttlichen Willens, der aber allein alles Geschehen bestimmt, jedes selbständige menschliche Tun sinnlos und absurd wird, dass es lächerlich wird.[20]

The prime example illustrating this idea is, of course, the play *Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon*, where no-one recognizes

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[20] Günter Waldmann, "Dürrenmatts paradoxes Theater. Die Komödie des christlichen Glaubens," *Wirkendes Wort*, 14 (1964), p. 32.

God's grace incarnate in the figure of Kurrubi. The play's "essential contention seems to be that the acts of Heaven are incomprehensible to human beings, and that only 'chance', or a contriving playwright, can assure us that God's grace sometimes falls into the hands of a man worthy of receiving it."[202]

This idea is portrayed again and again in Dürrenmatt's works, at first with God at the other side of the chasm, then fate or chance gradually taking his place as the incomprehensible, unpredictable factor which thwarts man's plans. Whether it be God or a more impersonal element like chance, the point is that there are always forces mightier than man that he cannot control. An absolute faith in God and religion, like the type mentioned above, helped man in the past to survive by giving meaning and strength to his endurance of troubles, just as *Vertrauen* in different values gives man's life meaning nowadays, as was discussed when dealing with the nature and purpose of *Vertrauen*.

The picture of the organized church in Dürrenmatt's works undergoes a slight evolution, but his idea of it crystallizes early and changes only in its intensity as time goes on. He uses the clergy to symbolize the church, and displays his critical attitude through their caricature.[203]

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[202] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 123.

[203] "Dürrenmatt's distinction between insincere piety and true faith is [...] exemplified in the delineation of the clergy in his works. The men of the cloth in his works are almost all portrayed as weak, ineffectual churchmen." Judith Mary Melton, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Die Stadt. Analysis and Significance of Dürrenmatt's Early Prose*. Diss. Louisiana

[203] The earliest definite portrayal of a man representing the Christian church in Dürrenmatt's works is to be found in *Der Hund*, where an impoverished preacher, who has given away all his worldly possessions and now lives with his daughter as a pauper, prays and preaches the word of God to the public from the Bible. He appears almost like one of Jesus' disciples, poor and tattered but pure of heart:

> Doch war seine Haut, die durch die Risse schimmerte, sauber, wie denn auch das zerrissene Gewand äusserst reinlich war: Kostbar jedoch sah die Bibel aus, auf deren Einwand Gold und Diamanten funkelten.[204]

It is evident that the man feels worldly trappings, such as clothing, are worthless, and that religion is the one thing of value, as his valuable Bible attests. Also, the man is a figure whom one could trust: his voice is "ruhig und fest",[205] i.e., confident and trust-inspiring. He is truly a good man.

However, one discovers towards the end of the story that he had always greatly feared the black dog, which becomes his mysterious constant companion and is the embodiment of evil. He is finally mauled to death by the beast, destroyed by the evil. Thus obviously the man's faith was not sufficiently strong, not absolute, although all outward appearances implied that he really personified what he stood for: namely unyielding faith. Dürrenmatt's succeeding portraits of the men of the church increasingly

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[203](cont'd)State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College 1972, p. 137.
[204] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Die Stadt*, p. 25.
[205] Ibid.

magnify this trait of not living up to what they represent, namely the manifestation of God's divine will.

The play *Der Besuch der alten Dame* and the prose comedy *Grieche sucht Griechin* were both published in the same year, but judging solely by the acidity of Dürrenmatt's portraits of the clergy, it is tempting to date *Der Besuch der alten Dame* as the earlier work. Religion and its ministers cannot help Ill because they are impractical and not suited to the real modern world:

> Inevitably Ill brings his fears to the minister. But the minister is caught up in a system of values which does not apply to any tangible situation such as Ill's. [...] He is a caricature of the obsession of some Protestant sects with guilt ('Think about the immortality of your soul... Search your conscience...Take the path of repentence'), together with their neglect of the key concept of God's grace and their helplessness in the face of reality.[206]

The first preacher in Dürrenmatt's works was sincere but quite unable in the end to maintain his faith and finally lost in the struggle against evil. The minister mentioned above merely mouthes platitudes, and does not lift a finger to try and help Ill. He is an integral part of the society of Güllen, sharing the townspeople's values. Accordingly, money is more important to him than the religion of which he is a representative. This becomes even more obvious in *Grieche sucht Griechin* where the Bishop is a former customer of Chloé's! He also is unable to offer Archilochos any practical advice on the latter's unique problem of being inundated by strokes of luck, and only

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[206] Kurt J. Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, p. 40.

regains his confident air when resorting to platitudes from the scriptures. As he resumes speaking this way, in vague churchly terms, it is "nun mit einem Male nicht mehr lispelnd und mit veränderter, fester Stimme."[207]

Dürrenmatt's most recent play to date is *Die Frist*. In it, the clergy, in the figures of a cardinal and an archbishop, are sorry figures indeed. They are now so lacking in propriety and special respected status, as the interpreters of the word of God, that a common actor can play the part of the cardinal with a young pimp as choirboy[208] with no-one noticing the difference. Thus the rôle of the clergy is reduced from representatives of the church and God to mere actors who mime the expected part.

Since one can no longer have *Vertrauen* in the representatives of the church, as they are merely maintaining a front and playing a part, this must also apply to organized religion per se. Dürrenmatt demonstrates how man can no longer rely on it to help him spiritually or practically.

Faith in God himself, as opposed to organized religion, warrants brief examination. The most shining example of a man discovering such faith is the student in *Der Tunnel*, who, after a lengthy and harrowing process of years without faith, even avoidance of confrontations of any kind which could force him to a realization culminating in the

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[207] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Grieche sucht Griechin*, p. 99.
[208] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Die Frist* (Zürich: Arche, 1977), p. 48.

terrifying train ride, places all his *Vertrauen* in God. It is true, absolute faith which he has gained:

> Glauben heisst hier, wo Gott selber sichtbar wird, nur noch empfangen, vertrauen, sich fallen lassen in seine schreckliche gnädige Hand. Das Vertrauen wird das höchste Tun, denn nur wer vertraut, ist wahrhaft frei und bringt seine Umwelt noch einmal und immer wieder zurecht.[209]

One character who absolutely refutes Christianity and goes to the other extreme, having fanatic *Vertrauen* in agnosticism, is Schwitter in *Der Meteor*. He is the student's counterpart, representing the antithesis of absolute faith in God: "Schwitter has become so conditioned to his agnosticism that he refuses to accept the miracle that happens to him even when it is repeated."[210]

A group of people who seemingly act as the student does is the cast of the radio play *Porträt eines Planeten*. They are faithless Earthlings, as the student was, who, as the end of the world is imminent, also appear to turn to God as a last resort.[211] But for them there exists no true faith whatever, either way--either totally for God or against. Theirs is merely a last-ditch attempt to enlist God's help in their favour:

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[209] Johannes Wirsching, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt: Der Tunnel. Eine theologische Analyse," *Der Deutschunterricht*, 25 (1973), p. 114.

[210] Murray B. Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 82.

[211] "Alle schreien den folgenden Psalm in höchster Verzweiflung, in unsinniger Hoffnung, dass Gott ihr Schicksal wenden möge," is written in the stage directions.

> Jetzt ist die Trennung zwischen den Göttern und den Menschen rettungslos. [...] In der Szene, wo die Menschheit untergeht, rufen die Menschen [...] Gott an. Lobe den Herren, schreien sie mit ihren letzten Atemzügen, sprechen von Dank und von menschlichem Versagen, von Sünde und Glauben. Glauben ist die Brücke zum unsichtbaren Gott. Glaube ist die letzte Waffe, die dem Menschen bleibt, mit ihm hoffen sie, Gott herbeizuzwingen als die einzige bleibende Wirklichkeit. Gott bleibt unsichtbar.[212]

Just as the clergy only **play** the part nowadays, so do these people themselves mouth the proper phrases pro forma.

Thus obviously *Vertrauen* in religion has changed substantially from the time when Dürrenmatt began writing, in the mid-1940's, to the present time, in the late 1970's. It is not surprising to witness such an inexorable change in attitude on the author's part, although strictly speaking his stance has altered less than it has intensified, in keeping with the general public's mood, during the span of three decades. Haas has an interesting and plausible theory concerning the popularity of the detective novel. He sees in it

> Ersatz für den fehlenden religiösen Glauben: er gibt die Zuversicht zum göttlichen Logos, zur göttlichen Gerechtigkeit. Kann man ganz ohne Religion leben? [...] Kriminalromane sind populär in Zeiten des sinkenden Glaubens, der sinkenden Ordnung, des drohenden Chaos, einer unsicheren, neu entstehenden Ordnung.[213]

Thus, because faith in God and God's order is lacking, the detective novel's appeal is greatly increased, owing to its artificially rigid rules and guaranteed triumph of justice

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[212] E. Brock-Sulzer, *Dürrenmatt in unserer Zeit* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, 1968), p. 70.
[213] Willy Haas, "Die Theologie im Kriminalroman," in *Der Kriminalroman*, I, ed. Jochen Vogt (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971), p. 122.

and divine order.

Holzapfel suggests that increasing rational knowledge may be the direct cause of decreasing faith since the two are largely incompatible, the former being of a reasonable nature and the latter emotional:

> In the last speech of *Die Physiker*, Dürrenmatt overtly brings up the timeless theme of religion versus science. He connects knowledge with loss of religious faith. Möbius, assuming his role of Solomon, tells how wisdom first destroyed his fear of God, and then the whole earth.[214]

Generally, in this age where knowledge and science are heavily emphasized, there seems to be little room for strong, irrational, unempirical and emotional beliefs such as *Vertrauen* in religion.

Religious Faith.

The topic of religious faith in Dürrenmatt's works has been extensively dealt with by numerous critics; therefore it will not be gone into in depth here. Another reason for its not being examined closely is because it is not very prominent in most of the prose works. However, religious faith should be considered because Dürrenmatt's early works do concern themselves with this theme, and because it is a factor important to the topic of *Vertrauen* per se, being so prominant in man's history. Dürrenmatt's own ideas and feelings regarding religious faith will be expounded, as these profoundly influence how he portrays faith in his writings. The purpose and nature of religious faith will

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[214] Robert E. Holzapfel, *Three Facets of FriedrichDürrenmatt's Drama*, p. 181.

also be examined briefly, and examples in Dürrenmatt's works will be pointed out.

Dürrenmatt's early works, *Die Stadt* and *Der Tunnel* emphasize the idea of faith in God. This is probably the first theme with which he concerns himself, namely *Vertrauen* in God. The issue is not whether this kind of *Vertrauen* is even possible for man or not. The very possibility of *Vertrauen* in God is questioned by Dürrenmatt as a result of his personal concept of God, which is that of a capricious, malevolent deity. He does not believe that God is dead, as one might conclude from the barren wasteland comprising the scenario for the story *Weihnacht*, evident from the fact that God either makes an appearance in the succeeding stories, or the question of faith in him is a central theme. There is a God present, for these early stories are

> Parabel von der Verzweiflung des Menschen, der sich der Lebenswahrheiten bewusst wird, der seine eigene Hilflosigkeit und Schwachheit erkennt und es Gott übelnimmt, dass er dem Menschen gegenüber nicht fairer gehandelt und ihm keine bessere Chance gegeben hat--der es aus diesen Gründen auch nicht mehr fertigbringt, Gott zu lieben und ihm zu vertrauen.[215]

The short story *Der Folterknecht* is a gruesome portrait of God's sadistic cruelty towards man: "Dahinter steht wieder der verzweifelte Schrei des Menschen, der Gott--da dieser allmächtig ist--für den grauenhaften Zustand der Menschheit im allgemeinen und des einzelnen im besonderen

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[215] Armin Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1969), p. 11.

verantwortlich macht."[216] Obviously, the question is: how can one have religious faith, *Vertrauen* in God, when this is the nature of God's being, as Dürrenmatt pessimistically portrays him?

However, *Vertrauen* to God eventually becomes a possibility as Dürrenmatt's idea of him changes. This evolution is visible throughout the course of the volume *Die Stadt*. In *Weihnacht* God is silent, not responding in the least to man's searching; in *Der Folterknecht* he dupes man and, having man in his hands, tortures him to death. In the main body of the stories following these first two, God is not visible: just man, struggling in a chaotic nihilistic world and trying to survive without help from, or faith in, any deity.[217]

The final two stories are very significant as they demonstrate the real change in Dürrenmatt's picture of God. In *Der Tunnel*, a young man who discovers true faith, absolute *Vertrauen* in God in the midst of calamity, is presented. In *Pilatus* there is a man with God standing before him, recognizing the God as such but unable to put his trust in him because the deity behaves totally contrary to his expectations. This scene shows how man with his limited mind is not capable of comprehending God's nature and being, and the result is that Pilatus feels an

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[216] Ibid.
[217] These stories can be categorized as follows: "The religious attitudes in Dürrenmatt's firstling: ambivalent and somber, with emphasis on suffering and torture." Timo Tiusanen, *A Study In Plays*, p. 40.

overwhelming fear rather than trust. Significantly, the volume closes with this story, although chronologically *Der Tunnel* was written later.[218] This would appear to be an indication that God exists, though incomprehensible to man and causing man much suffering (Pilate suffers fear, remorse and guilt because of the God, and dies spiritually when Christ dies physically. His face, after Christ's resurrection, is described thus: "Unermesslich war es eine Landschaft des Todes vor ihm ausgebreitet, fahl im frühen Lichte des Morgens, und wie sich die beiden Augen öffneten, waren sie kalt.")[219] It appears that Dürrenmatt has adopted another Existentialist idea along the lines of Sartre's philosophy, as far as religious faith is concerned, for the above concept is derived from Kierkegaard. It is well-known that Dürrenmatt was influenced by Kierkegaard's writings; he admits as much in a conversation with the critic Diller,[220] and reports that he wanted to write his Ph.D. dissertation on Kierkegaard--but instead wrote his first play *Es steht geschrieben*.[221]

> According to Kierkegaard, to be a serious Christian means to imitate Christ, to die unto the world, to be sacrificed in this life, for 'him whom God blesses He *ipso facto* curses in a worldly sense.' Kierkegaard calls his ideal Christian a 'Knight of faith', who most likely appears as a fool to his

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[218] *Pilatus* was written in 1949, *Der Tunnel* in 1952, according to Hansel's *Dürrenmatt Bibliographie*.
[219] Dürrenmatt, *Die Stadt*, p. 193.
[220] Edward Diller, *Die Gedankenwelt von Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, Diss. Middlebury 1962.
[221] Peter Wyrsch, "Die Dürrenmatt-Story," *Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung* (Zofingen, 25 Mar. 1963), p. 25.

neighbours.[222]

Dürrenmatt's attitude towards God's role in relation to man and *Vertrauen* to God changes even further: the malicious God gradually becomes the more impersonal element of chance. The focus shifts away from the person of God towards man and how he copes with the havoc wreaked on him and his plans by chance. The destructive agent is no longer important; what matters is man's reaction. Dürrenmatt's stance changes so much that what at the very beginning was unjust action on God's part becomes just judgement, because of man's irresponsibility. In the beginning, Dürrenmatt considered man helpless and suffering because of God; now he considers man responsible for his own actions and suffering:

> Die Welt ist so, wie der Mensch sie macht. Allah in seiner Gerechtigkeit richtet sie nur. [...] Der Allah in unserer Geschichte ist unerbittlich und nicht der liebe Gott, an den unsere Bequemlichkeit so gerne glaubt, dessen Metier darin besteht, Gnade zu üben und vor unserer Schlamperei beide Augen zuzudrücken.[223]

In other words, the importance lies not with the question of whether one does or does not believe in God; the importance lies with how responsible one's actions are. If religious faith aids in shouldering one's responsibility and successfully engaging in the necessary struggle, then religious faith is fine; but it itself has no significance as a goal. This becomes obvious when one realizes that religious faith and *Vertrauen* in God play no prominant role

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[222] Robert Holzapfel, *The Way of the Individual to God--The Way of the Individual in the World--The World as Chaos*, Diss. State University of Iowa 1965, p. 6.
[223] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 94.

in Dürrenmatt's prose works, except for the first volume discussed above. In none of these works, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, *Der Verdacht*, *Grieche sucht Griechin*, *Die Panne*, *Das Versprechen*, *Im Coiffeurladen* and *Der Sturz* is the quest for religious faith an important theme. Dürrenmatt expressly asserts in his introduction to *Die Panne*: "So droht kein Gott mehr."[224] This view does not banish God completely from existence; it merely means that he offers little consolation to man nowadays:

> Die Sinnlosigkeit und die grausame Wahrheit der menschlichen Existenz stehen in unüberwindlichem Gegensatz zum Glauben an einen gnädigen Gott. Wenn aber der Glaube an einen Gott trotz aller Erfahrungen in einer furchtbaren Welt nicht aufgegeben wird, so kann dieser Gott nur als schweigende, verborgene [...] Macht verstanden werden.[225]

One example of a character who astonishingly does retain his religious faith in the face of unspeakable suffering at the hands of his fellow man is the Jew Gulliver in *Der Verdacht*. This religious faith enables him to survive by lending him strength and giving his life purpose:

> Gullivers Glaube ist alt-testamentlich, aber nicht anti-christlich; er klagt die Christen nicht als Christen an, sondern als Unchristen. Darin, wie in manch anderer Hinsicht, gleicht er seinem Freund Bärlach.[226]

Dürrenmatt maintains that if religious faith supplies the individual with strength, that is good; but what is right (appropriate and suitable and effective) may not be right

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[224] Dürrenmatt, *Die Panne*, p. 11.
[225] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 18.
[226] Peter Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 181.

for all. This is why Dürrenmatt believes that there is little value in institutions like the church, which has guiding principles supposedly applicable to all. It has become apparent that society is too fragmented for a set of rules to apply to all people; and the second drawback has to do with the church itself:

> We should not generalize our private religious feelings: this process leads to institutionalized religion, to the power of various churches, to conflict between various ideologies, to gross intolerance.[227]

To sum up the theme of religious faith in Dürrenmatt's works as it stems from the author himself: he was brought up in a religious household, which influenced him emotionally: "Ich bin meiner Veranlagung nach ein religiöser Mensch,"[228] he reveals. Religious elements are strongly, almost exclusively, evident in his early work; then recede to provide the foundation for his ideas on morality.[229] Thus, emotionally Dürrenmatt has been influenced by religious faith, but intellectually he largely rejects it:

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[227] Timo Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 408.
[228] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Gespräche mit Heinz Ludwig Arnold* (Zürich: Arche, 1976), p. 40.
[229] Concerning *Die Stadt*, Dürrenmatt writes in the epilogue that he was waging a struggle within himself: "In diesen Erzählungen verlor Dürrenmatt den Kampf gegen Gott, gegen den religiösen Glauben; man könnte auch in einem gewissen Sinne auch umgekehrt sagen, dass er den Kampf gegen die Philosophie, namentlich aber gegen den verzweifelten Nihilismus 'gewann'. Denn von diesen Kämpfen geht es in diesen Erzählungen." Peter Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 33.

> Ich rate ab. Ich rate jedem ab. Ich werde jeden zum Unglauben verführen, wenn er nur zum Unglauben zu verführen ist. Das einzige, was ich anerkenne und was ich behaupte ist: Wenn es einen Glauben gibt, wenn es einen Gott gibt, dann ist etwas, was Gott setzt, der Zweifel.[230]

His values are derived from the religion he experienced as a child. For instance, his images of the vengeful God in his early prose hark back to the God of the Old Testament, where God's law consists of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Even the humanistic values he subscribes to are very Christian, which will become clear when the topic of morality is examined. A few brief examples will illustrate in what guise religious faith appears in Dürrenmatt's works.

Not only is the theme of Dürrenmatt's first play *Es steht geschrieben* the subject of religious faith, but the whole structure is reminiscent of the Bible: "Die Sprache dieser Täufer ist eng an die biblische Sprache der Lutherübersetzung angelehnt, vor allem an die Psalmen."[231] The early radio play *Der Doppelgänger* deals extensively with religious faith: Dürrenmatt is portraying

> salvation by faith very seriously and makes it the basis of the play. All men share in the guilt of being human, and one man's faith is capable of redeeming all mankind.[232]

Also, the Christian principle of original sin is an underlying theme: "All men are guilty by virtue of being human; and they are, as in Kafka, guilty before committing

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[230] Ibid.
[231] Chr. Jauslin, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Zur Struktur seiner Dramen* (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1964), p. 32.
[232] Murray Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 91.

any specific act."[233] This concept of guilt, based at first on religious faith, later changes as Dürrenmatt's views become more humanistic. Later man is no longer considered guilty automatically, but rather guilty by choice, since the average modern man chooses the complacent, morally weak path as do all his fellow men.

There is another important idea that comes to the fore in this radio play, which is the forerunner of the situation in *Der Besuch der alten Dame* and *Die Panne* though in a slightly different, namely religious, vein. It is the idea of accepting an unjust fate, armed with the faith or trust that it is all to good purpose, or simply that it is not senseless. In Christian terms it means that, given the existence of original sin, man "soll also jede Strafe demütig annehmen, die ihm das Gericht (Gott) auferlegt."[234] The figure of the director in this radio play plays the foil to the author figure's Christian ideas, thinking in a logical manner and finding the whole situation of an objectively innocent man accepting execution because of another man's crime very unjust. With this work, Dürrenmatt is subjecting the religious dogmas he accepted emotionally as a boy to a relentless intellectual scrutiny: "Dürrenmatt illustriert die Absurdität einer solchen Lehre, die jeder Logik, jedem vernünftigen Rechtsgefühl widerspricht."[235]

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[233] Ibid., p. 92.
[234] Armin Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 63.
[235] Ibid., p. 64.

The next play he wrote, *Der Blinde*, again concentrates on religious faith, this time as espoused by a single character:

> The existence of God which predicates the existence and the concept of good to evil (that which is ordained by God and that which resists him) is the foundation of the duke's structure of values.[236]

The beneficial and tragic effects of this unbending faith have already been discussed. As with the first full-length play, this one's basic elements are again religious in themselves: the language used is "von einem biblischen Pathos erfüllt."[237]

One final example from the multitude is the structure of *Der Besuch der alten Dame*, which is very biblical. Claire takes on the dimensions of both an avenging angel and a god-figure, with her single-minded desire for revenge and her absolute power and control over the microcosm of Güllen. There is the Old Testament revenge motif (eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth) visible not only in relation to Ill, but also in the figures of Claire's bizarre travelling companions, the men bribed by Ill many years ago, castrated and blinded by her for the part they played in the crime against her. However, the main ideas themselves in this play are humanistic rather than religious; it is not original sin which is being debated here, but concrete guilt as a result

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[236] Kurt J. Fickert, *To Heaven and Back. The New Morality in the Plays of Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, Diss. Kentucky 1972 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), p. 22.
[237] Chr. Jauslin, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Zur Struktur seiner Dramen* (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1964), p. 41.

of a crime of moral transgression.

Generally speaking, in the later works the principles of organized religious faith are present, but are used in the service of a humanistic outlook on life on Dürrenmatt's part, rather than in the original, strictly religious sense. In other words, he uses the religious structure with a modified humanistic significance:

> Calvin propounded rigid and uncompromising principles of faith: the impotence of man, the denial of free will after the Fall, and the justification of faith in itself without the necessity or even the possibility of good deeds. All of these points are conspicuously present in Dürrenmatt's works.[232]

This particular critic means this assessment literally, having interpreted Dürrenmatt from a religious point of view; but even when the humanitarian aspect of faith rather than the religious, is stressed, these ideas still stand out in stark relief. Modern man is impotent in today's chaotic world; because of the complex situation, he has little free will and can only make choices pertaining to himself which do not affect others. He cannot change anything for the better in society. What Dürrenmatt does is use the Protestant faith he was brought up in as a basis for his personal view of today's world and as a basis for his morality:[233]

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[232] Edward Diller, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Calvinism and Chaos," *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht*, 63 (1971), p. 29.

[233] "The ethical nucleus of each play is apparant; it is not, however, the Protestant ethic which Dürrenmatt conveys, but an ethic from a Protestant point of view." Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, pp. 12-13.

> Welttheater ist Darstellung der Welt sub speciae aeterni. Doch auch das Ewige hat seine Geschichte. Ihr trägt Dürrenmatt Rechnung, indem er die Welt in einer veränderten heilsgeschichtlichen Situation darstellt. Darin eben ist er ein nachchristlicher Dichter.[240]

Pestalozzi goes on to label Dürrenmatt's techniques: "Dürrenmatts Dramen sind nicht einfach Veranschaulichungen der modernen Welt, sondern Deutungen der Welt durch nachchristliche Bilder."[241]

Generally speaking, the purpose and results of religious faith are the same as those of *Vertrauen*, since the essence of religious faith is basically *Vertrauen* in God and the relevant religious precepts. The belief lends strength to the believers, as is obvious in the case of the Anabaptists:

> Die Täufer [...], die die absolute Forderung des Christentums bis zum Unsinn ausleben, behalten noch in der Lächerlichkeit innere Macht: 'Sei zufrieden, Bäcker aus Haarlem:/ Dein Tod war lächerlich, kümmere dich nicht darum./ Nur das bleibt bestehen, Prophet,/ Was uns ärgert und worüber wir lachen.'[242]

Religious faith without adherence to any particular church is the personal faith of Akki the beggar in *Ein Engel kommt nach Babylon*. This faith, unbound to any restrictive earthly structure, makes personal freedom and the recognition of God's grace accessible to him, contrasted with other Babylonians who are unconcerned with sincere faith:

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[240] Karl Pestalozzi, "Friedrich Dürrenmatt," in *Deutsche Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, II, ed. Otto Mann (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1967), p. 389.
[241] Ibid., p. 400.
[242] E. Brock-Sulzer, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt in unserer Zeit* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, 1968), p. 51.

> Akki is thus placed between two believers in formulas of thought. The Angel is completely adjusted to creation: "What is created is good, and what is good is happy." This satisfaction with God's order is contrasted with an equally strong belief in man's order as represented by Nebuchadnezzar and his perfect state.[243]

Holzapfel points out a feature of religious faith: "Even in physical imprisonment, where the temptation to despair is strongest, the true Christian is free to have faith."[244] The first example of this in Dürrenmatt's work is Knipperdollinck, thrown into jail by Bockelson, yet clinging tenaciously to his religious faith. Dürrenmatt later preserved this same idea when he maintained that one could choose either to despair or not to despair; and, if opting for the latter, that one should persevere in the struggle against chaos in life, believing that there is a purpose in positive action even if defeat is the outcome of the action. Without belief, religious or otherwise, there are many things in life that one cannot appreciate. Schwitter's case in *Der Meteor* demonstrates this:

> Dieser Mensch, weil er nicht glaubt, wird nie darauf kommen, dass er tot war; er wird immer sagen: Das war ein Ohnmachtsanfall, oder was auch immer. Das heisst, Lazarus ohne den Glauben wird nie das Wunder akzeptieren können; das Wunder nützt gar nichts ohne den Glauben.[245]

Indeed, an entire story, *Der Tunnel*, is devoted to portraying collective man entirely lacking in religious faith: "Dürrenmatt paints a terrifying picture, showing the

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[243] Timo Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 112.
[244] Robert E. Holzapfel, *Three Facets of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Drama*, p. 34.
[245] *Gespräch mit Heinz Ludwig Arnold*, p. 39.

impotency [sic] to the complete lack of direction of modern man and the absurdity of his smug undertakings,"[244] It is difficult to determine, in this relatively early work, whether or not Dürrenmatt is advocating religious faith as being the solution to man's problems; the student discovers trust in God as being the solution for him, but this does not necessarily mean that it is the answer for all. What Dürrenmatt is probably objecting to is man's ostentatious attempts at self-sufficiency and refusal to acknowledge that he is not the highest being in the universe, as for instance the passengers and crew of the train believe, with their absolute reliance and uncritical dependence on man's technology, mere machinery, to make everything alright in the end. After examining all the evidence, one may conclude that although the element of religious faith is very prominent in Dürrenmatt's works, he uses it as a base for his tales and system of ethics, but does not espouse it or recommend it per se as a philosophy of value to modern man.

B. Faith

The purpose of having a firm belief is the same as that of *Vertrauen* and religious faith: to provide one with strength to accomplish things. Two examples of belief will be examined here for their viability, i.e., whether or not they are secure beliefs which aid the believers. The first case is the guard in the short story *Die Stadt*, the nature

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[244] Diller, "Chaos and Calvinism," p. 29.

of whose belief has already been discussed above. The salient point is that he desperately clings to the belief that he is a guard and not a prisoner so that he is not overwhelmed by despair. However, his is not a strong, confident belief; doubt gnaws away at him for the simple reason that his belief, supposedly empirical, is based on extremely ambiguous facts that are, moreover, few in number. Strictly speaking, they are not even facts, but mere objects which he interprets to form the basis for his faith. For example, he decides that the niche he is to occupy in the tunnel must be the guard's post: "Daher kam der Gedanke als eine Erlösung, meine Nische sei das Versteck des Wärters."[247] Unfortunately, he later discovers that there are more little grottos along the tunnel wall similar to his, which would seem to nullify the special position he has assumed for himself. The entire story consists of assumptions, vague situations and contradictions, very reminiscent of the frighteningly incomprehensible atmosphere in Kafka's short stories, not supplying the narrator with anything concrete to base a belief on. He tries in vain to unravel the nature of his surroundings and situation, and his belief provides him with little solace:

> Seine dahin zielende Anstrengung wird zunächst eine logisch-denkerische sein; aber allmählich wird er dunkel ahnen, nicht nur dass das logische Denken an sich unzureichend ist und dass ihm ein vertrauender Glaube vorangehen und folgen muss, sondern auch dass er sich bei seinem logischen Denken im Grunde schon immer auf einen solchen vertrauenden Glauben

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[247] *Die Stadt*, p. 130.

gestützt hat.[248]

In other words, the narrator's belief in the order of things, namely that he is a guard and has been assigned the responsibility of guarding others in the tunnel, is not based on fact but rather on his need for security.

The same reason for the existence of a belief is to be seen in the case of the student in *Der Tunnel*. He is an unprepossessing, average fellow , whose only outstanding characteristics are his talent or ability to see the chaos below the surface of the world, and the mental formation he has devised to keep the chaos at bay. It is an intellectual order which he has adopted, but one he channels all of his energy into to maintain; a belief, "die, im Unterschied zu konventionellen Fassaden- und Kulissenordnungen, das Schreckliche abzuwehren oder in sich aufzunehmen vermag."[249] Cotton ear plugs, corpulence, cigarets between the lips and glasses covered by sunglasses all belong in this order: all to block out the insidious forces of chaos.[250] This time, the belief is based on fact which the student is able to recognize; namely that beneath the superficial order in the world, turbulent chaos reigns supreme. But again his belief is demonstrably based on a need: the need to protect himself against this chaos. But the student's belief, that he can

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[248] Peter Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 92.
[249] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 106.
[250] "Alles, was er tat, war nur ein Vorwand, hinter der Fassade seines Tuns Ordnung zu erlangen, [...] angesichts des Schrecklichen, gegen das er sich mit Fett polsterte, Zigarren in den Mund steckte, Wattebüschel in die Ohren." *Der Tunnel*, pp. 13-14.

escape chaos, does not help him in the end; for in the end he must confront it directly with his whole being, and in doing so chooses to surrender himself to God, adopting a sincere religious faith that effectively supplies him with true strength to endure.

Thus both beliefs, the guard's and the student's, were insufficient to furnish the believers with any comfort. The reason may be that both cases occur in Dürrenmatt's early works, where he is still involved in the process of gradually distancing himself from religious faith; and the alternative, secular faith, is slowly growing more substantial and solid. Here, however, it is still weak.

In the more mature prose works, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, *Der Verdacht* and *Die Panne* for instance, personal beliefs figure very prominently for the main characters of the works. A most significant figure in these works is Inspector Bärlach, who appears in two of the above-mentioned works and who possesses a very weighty humanistic belief, weighty because he manifests many of Dürrenmatt's own beliefs, as will be demonstrated below. Firstly, Bärlach does belong to a *genre* of detectives which has appeared quite frequently in the realm of detective novels; he shares many characteristics with these literary figures. He is the

> nach aussen steinharte, nach innen existentialistisch-nihilistische Detektiv. [...] Diese Detektive haben keine Bindungen; sie sind geschieden, Liebe ist für sie ein leeres Wort; Geld interessiert sie nur insofern, als es ihnen zum täglichen Konsum von Alkohol und Zigaretten verhilft. An Gott verschwenden sie keinen Gedanken.

> Sie besitzen aber [...] eine Art von Solidarität für die in der Gesellschaft benachteiligten Menschen. Es sind Skeptiker, die Lug und Trug der heutigen Welt durchschaut haben. [...] Warum eigentlich ihr fanatischer Kampf gegen Mörder? Er ist bei ihnen eine Art Religionsersatz. Bärlach gleicht ihnen in vielem. Auch bei ihm spielen Frauen, Liebe, Verwandte, Vaterland, Gott keine Rolle. Aber er kämpft bis zuletzt [...] unter Lebensgefahr für das, was ihm als Gerechtigkeit scheint.[251]

However, Bärlach's personal belief which aids him to succeed against the criminal Gastmann consists of more than the above characteristics:

> Bärlach is in this case the successful manipulator of the given circumstances, using his **rational grasp** of the situation and his **understanding of the behavior** of the police lieutenant Tschanz to defeat Gastmann.[252]

In other words, by properly utilizing both his understanding of human nature and his ability to take chance into account rather than being thwarted in his goals by it, he succeeds in winning against the criminal element in this case.

A third factor contributing to Bärlach's victory must be the intensity of his firm belief that what he is doing is right. He pursues Gastmann for forty years, which certainly attests to the strength of his conviction.[253] Thus, not only does he firmly believe in the principle of justice, the reason for his relentless pursuit of Gastmann; the basic belief which this figure of the wise old man espouses is the very affirmation of life:

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[251] Armin Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, pp. 50-51.
[252] Peter Gontrum, "Ritter, Tod und Teufel," *Seminar* 1, (1965), p. 93.
[253] Also, despite his serious illness, he continues in fighting perpetrators of evil like Gastmann and Emmenberger, even from his hospital bed.

> Bärlach resembles [...] the Carrusian prototype whose answer to the absurdity of life is not despair but affirmation. Lacking any transcendental meaning, life itself assumes an absolute value.[254]

This idea is substantiated further by the fact that Bärlach appears to have a most tenacious hold on life; although old and infirm, with his illness rapidly gaining ground, he gets a surprising reprieve from the doctors thanks to an operation. He has many brushes with death, through its henchmen of evil figures: witness the attack on him by Gastmann's dog, Traps entering his home in the dead of the night and nearly killing him, and Emmenberger coming within a hair's breadth of fatally operating on him. Somehow, he survives all these dangerous experiences:

> This instinct for survival, present in all forms of life, is expressed consciously in Bärlach's life, in his physical joy of living and consequently in his total affirmation of all life.[255]

Thus Bärlach represents a truly positive life force.

Although this positive life force is very strong, and it is Bärlach's belief in it which lends him great strength and makes success possible for him in several instances, it is not unquestioningly the ultimate victor every single time in the battle against evil. This becomes evident when one compares Bärlach, the proponent of this vital life force, to his opponents Gastmann and Emmenberger, representatives of a belief diametrically opposed to Bärlach's. In order to fully understand this, the nature of the latters' belief must

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[254] Ralph William Beckmeier, *Dürrenmatt and the Detective Novel. Committment and Responsibility*, Diss. New York University 1973, p. 42.
[255] Ibid., p 44.

first be examined. Gastmann is the personification of unrestricted freedom, which, because it is an extreme, absolute belief, carries with it harmful ramifications. He is totally convinced in his belief that:

> a man who operates on nihilistic principles, in a freedom unrestricted by law, cannot be stopped by the law if he is clever enough. [...] Gastmann opposes not only Bärlach, but all and any restraint on the freedom of the individual. Bärlach realilzes that whatever Gastmann does is simply and purely the expression of this freedom; "die Freiheit des Nichts."(p. 104)[256]

Gastmann is a nihilistic figure; he holds life to be without purpose or meaning. This is the exact opposite of Bärlach, who holds life to be the highest value possible. Gastmann's motivation, expressed in Nietzschean terms, is as follows:

> Bei Gastmann ist [...] nicht der **Wille zur Macht** die Triebfeder seines Handelns, sondern seine Freiheit jenseits von Gut und Böse. [...] Aus der Perspektive Pater Browns und Bärlachs erscheinen die Taten der Mörder als Ergebnis einer Amoralität jenseits von Gut und Böse, also als Ausfluss des Bösen schlechthin und als Ergebnis einer falschen Rationalität.[257]

Gastmann's belief in absolute freedom is totally contrary to humanism:

> Theoretically, the absence of any divine authority gives the individual absolute freedom. This makes of all men potential gods. In exercising this freedom, Gastmann assumes the role of a totally arbitrary and capricious god, a role which, when enacted in the context of social reality, becomes the expression of

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[256] Peter Gontrum, "Ritter, Tod und Teufel," *Seminar* 1, (1965), pp. 92-93.
[257] Walter Seifert, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der Richter und sein Henker*, (München: Oldenbourg, 1975), p. 107.

the dehumanization of man. [258]

When Gastmann exercises his freedom to the ultimate limit without any consideration for his fellow man, it obviously occurs at the expense of others; for example, the innocent victims he murders for the sake of his bet with Bärlach. This constitutes the criminal element of his belief.

Emmenberger's personal *credo*, similar to Gastmann's but more extreme, can be summarized as follows:

> He believes in the absolute freedom and power of the self, a power which manifests itself in causing pure suffering and destruction: 'Man kann nur an die Materie glauben, und das Ich. Es gibt keine Gerechtigkeit--es gibt nur die Freiheit. [...] Die Freiheit ist der Mut zum Verbrechen, weil sie selbst ein Verbrechen ist.'(p. 140)[259]

Thus he also believes in absolute freedom, this time **expressly** at the expense of others in the form of torturing other people. As a corollory to belief in absolute freedom, Emmenberger also believes in total lack of responsibility on man's part:

> Der Arzt verneint alle moralischen Masstäbe. Bewusstes Streben des Menschen zum Guten wird ebenso geleugnet wie die Möglichkeit, schuldig zu werden. In der Philosophie Emmenbergers existiert keine Gerechtigkeit, und der Mensch kann auch nicht zur Verantwortung für sein Tun gezogen werden.[260]

Emmenberger's belief is strong enough to enable him to wield power over the many rich patients he has in his sanatorium, as we have already seen; but it cannot help him to escape from justice which appears to exist after all, thanks to the combined efforts of Bärlach, Gulliver and chance. Also,

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[258] Beckmeier, *Dürrenmatt and the Detective Novel*, p. 93.
[259] Gontrum, "Ritter, Tod und Teufel," pp. 90-91.
[260] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren* , p. 35.

absolute freedom does not appear to exist either; otherwise Emmenberger would not have had to take great pains to cover his tracks during the war. He was restricted in a certain sense.

Spycher interprets the figure of Emmenberger as not garnering much satisfaction from his belief either:

> Als existierender Mensch verrät er seinen **Hunger nach einem anderen Glauben** als dem seinen, nämlich nach dem Christlichen oder wenigstens einem humanistischen; er ist (wie Gastmann, wie alle Nihilisten bei Dürrenmatt) von der Kierkegaardschen Krankheit zum Tode heimgesucht.[261]

This would seem to be borne out by Emmenberger's reaction to Bärlach's silence after demanding that Bärlach show him a powerful belief on a par with his own: he gazes "gespannt und gierig nach dem Kranken."[262] Bärlach says not a word:

> Da wurde Emmenbergers Antlitz, das gierig nach einer Antwort gewesen war, kalt und entspannt. Nur die Narbe über dem rechten Auge blieb gerötet. Es war, als ob ihn ein Ekel schüttelte, als er sich müde und gleichgültig vom Kranken abwandte und zur Tür hinausging.[263]

In any case, both Gastmann and Emmenberger lose their struggle against Bärlach and chance, despite their strong beliefs.

As previously mentioned, Bärlach's belief is strong enough to furnish him with extraordinary strength to survive and even to win (though not without the helping hand of chance) in his struggle first against Gastmann, then Emmenberger. But the reason why good is not so strong as to

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[261] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, pp. 192-193.
[262] *Der Verdacht*, p. 143.
[263] Ibid., p. 146.

automatically conquor evil in every case is because both forces are simply opposite sides of the same coin, with neither necessarily more powerful than the other. Taken by themselves, they are equally powerful, with the additional factors of human nature and the chaos of the modern world perhaps giving the evil forces a bit of an edge. It is just as logical to side with the positive life forces, as Bärlach does, as it is to decide on the meaninglessness of life, as there is enough evidence to support both conclusions: "In comparing Emmenberger to Gastmann one sees that Dürrenmatt has carefully defined both as exponents of a reasoned and free choice."[364] This diametric opposition on the part of the good and evil adversaries' beliefs becomes apparent again when considering the factor of chance (*Zufall*) which is so important for the plans and actions of all characters:

> Both Bärlach and Gastmann recognize the role of chance in life, yet the conclusions they base on their identical observations are diametrically opposite. For Bärlach, chance means a regrettable hole in the inscrutable chain of logic supporting a moral world order; for Gastmann, chance guarantees a freedom to do whatever one pleases, whether good or evil, without any moral scruples at all. They have lived accordingly.[365]

Seifert substantiates the idea that the two characters started with the same philosophy but ended up with opposite beliefs: "Es ist offenbar, dass Bärlach und Gastmann gleiche philosophische Grundpositionen haben, wenn sich auch der ethische Rigorismus des einen vom Nihilismus des anderen

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[364] Gontrum, "Ritter, Tod und Teufel," pp. 92-93.
[365] Tiusanen, *A Study In Plays*, p. 131.

krass unterscheidet."[246] This explains precisely why good is not significantly stronger than evil: both positions are the end products of a logical line of reasoning and one chooses one or the other, as one wishes, according to Dürrenmatt, either to despair or not to. They are equal in validity and power.

This is why, in the first novel, Bärlach must resort to all kinds of sleight of hand in order to get Gastmann finally: "Gastmann bleibt bis zum Schluss der geistig Überlegene, da es Bärlach nicht gelungen ist, ihn wegen seiner Verbrechen zu überführen."[247] This is also the explanation for Bärlach's silence, in the second novel, when asked by Emmenberger to demonstrate a belief which is better than the nihilism the criminal doctor has chosen. Bärlach cannot name one, for his belief in humanism is actually no better than Emmenberger's nihilism. Emmenberger would be able to use logical arguments to nullify Bärlach's belief and thereby destroy his will to survive and fight. This is why Bärlach does not respond to Emmenberger's challenge, and it is the weakness of the force of good. Dr. Marlok, Emmenberger's personal assistant and mistress, also exposes the weakness of Bärlach's belief. She "fasziniert und erschreckt Bärlach gleichermassen, und zwar deshalb, weil ihre Weltanschauung zum Teil die seine, zum grösseren Teil

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[246] Walter Seifert, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Der Richter und sein Henker*, (München: Oldenbourg, 1975), pp. 59-60.
[247] Ibid., p. 103.

eine düstere, negative Möglichkeit der seinen ist."[268] And the Jew Gulliver at the end of the novel elucidates how weak the forces of good are again when he reproaches Bärlach for trying to fight evil all alone:

> Man kann heute nicht mehr das Böse allein bekämpfen, wie die Ritter einst allein gegen irgendeinen Drachen ins Feld zogen. Die Zeiten sind vorüber, wo es genügt, etwas scharfsinnig zu sein, um die Verbrecher, mit denen wir es heute zu tun haben, zu stellen.[269]

In the later prose work *Die Panne*, *Vertrauen* in certain secular beliefs is also a very important theme. This is true for all main characters: for Alfredo Traps, and for the old lawyers. Their *Vertrauen* in their respective beliefs establishes the basis for the story, and the clash between these beliefs provides the action. Firstly, the values that Traps holds dear are as follows: he is a very bourgeois, average kind of person, a "Dutzendgesicht"[270] as Dürrenmatt labels him. His values can be deduced directly from his appearance: he is

> fünfundvierzig, noch lange nicht korpulent, angenehme Erscheinung, mit genügenden Manieren, wenn auch eine gewisse Dressur verratend, indem Primitives, Hausiererhaftes durchschimmert--.[271]

In other words, he is a simple man with little formal education who values outward appearances, as his pride in his status symbol of a car also demonstrates. This would already indicate a certain superficiality on his part.

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[268] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 189.
[269] *Der Verdacht*, p. 151.
[270] *Die Panne*, p. 12.
[271] Ibid., p. 15.

He possesses one further characteristic of note: social and business ambition, which again is a superficial value as it is solely concerned with one's appearance in society in relation to other social climbers. This is, of course, the fuel which fires him to commit the crime in the first place: in order to advance quickly and effortlessly in the business world, he brings about his boss' death. The same constellation has already occurred once before in Dürrenmatt's works: Tschanz in *Der Richter und sein Henker* murders his superior for similar reasons, and is in fact a figure very much like Traps. He has the same inferiority complex because of a lack of formal education, and aims to acquire the car and girlfriend of his murdered superior, again all outward appearances of success.

This is the extent of Traps' values and beliefs: Given this, it is not surprising to realize that he gradually accepts the values of the old lawyers because there exists a need in him to do so. Kohlschmidt terms this need a desire for "herausdrängen aus Enge und Beschränktheit der bourgeoisen Oberflächlichkeit."[273] Traps first agrees to play the old lawyers' game, and perceives it merely as a game; but as the evening progresses he **believes** in his role as the defendant judged guilty of first-degree murder more and more:

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[273] Werner Kohlschmidt, "Selbstrechenschaft und Schuldbewusstsein im Menschenbild der Gegenwartsdichtung," in *Das Menschenbild in der Dichtung*, ed. Albert Schaeffer (München: Beck, 1965), p. 191.

> He has been forced by circumstances to play a part, but now he too is transformed and becomes one with his assumed personality. [...] Traps is only too eager to go on playing his part in the really charming fairy tale.[273]

Quite simply, Traps' belief in the value of money and social position proves totally inadequate in providing him with satisfaction in his confrontation with the old lawyers' code of absolute justice. He is gradually converted by the whole situation to this new belief; to the point of where he follows through and takes his own life, in accordance with the tenets of this strict legal system, to atone for the sin he has committed. In society's eyes, his action was not a sin, and by carrying out the murder he gained as a reward more money and a better position. In the light of this strict legal belief, his action was a sin and he must atone for it by death.

At first, Traps did derive some satisfaction from the results of his actions, but it was only a small amount added to his empty, superficial life. When he adopts the belief of the old lawyers, he finds it brings far greater satisfaction to him, makes him stand out from the mass of uninteresting, middle-class people. Traps has differentiated himself from his fellow man by throwing over society's accepted values which prize material gains over humanistic values, and by recognizing and accepting his responsibility in the murder of another human being as judged by the standard of absolute justice espoused by the old judiciary officials.

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[273] Lida Kirchberger, "'Kleider machen Leute' and Dürrenmatt's 'Panne,'" *Monatshefte*, 52 (1960), p. 6.

> In his death sentence he receives he sees the acknowledgement of his true abilities and the justice he has always craved. [He is] happy as he has never been in the insignificance of his bourgeois life.[274]

Seen in the light of this value system, Traps finds it indeed flattering that he was capable of such a shrewdly-executed murder.

Interestingly, several critics feel strongly that Traps, being a more-average-than-average, dull-minded, materialistic-oriented member of the middle class, would be incapable of truly comprehending and accepting the legal values of the old men.[275] According to these critics, he

> liegt unter dem Niveau des Bewusstseins von Reue und Schuld [...]. Stiller [in Max Frisch's novel *Stiller*] und Alfredo Traps sind letztlich beide ohnmächtig, den 'Mord' auf sich zu nehmen oder auch nur zu begreifen.[276]

To this, Tiusanen adds:

> Traps' suicide showed the fatal consequences when an order, a tragic world order, was imposed on a chaotic mind not inclined to cherish any moral ponderings at all.[277]

If these opinions are valid, then Traps' self-inflicted death is not the ultimate testimony to an embracing of responsibility, but is an accident, a "Panne," as Hans Mayer terms it, because Traps mistakes the game for reality and goes too far in actually carrying through with his own execution. Hans Mayer bases his interpretation partly on the opening words of the story when Traps' car breakdown is

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[274] Kirchberger, "Dürrenmatts 'Panne,'" p. 7.
[275] Hans Mayer, Werner Kohlschmidt and Timo Tiusanen.
[276] Kohlschmidt, "Selbstrechenschaft und Schuldbewusstsein," p. 191.
[277] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 172.

described, "Unfall, harmlos zwar, auch hier"[2'8] [my own emphasis] is written, meaning that there must be an accident of some sort elsewhere. These alternate interpretations are perhaps valid, but the first view of Traps adopting the officials' belief seems the more likely one.

The belief of the old judiciary officials, which was mentioned above time and time again, should now be examined in slightly greater detail. These men hold absolute justice to be the highest ideal worth striving for. Hans Mayer's following assessment of their belief will explain it clearly:

> An der kausalen Verknüpfung von Schuld und Sühne freilich wird streng festgehalten. Diese drei Juristen [...] sind strenge Anhänger der in der Strafrechtslehre längst abgeschaffnen 'Bedingungstheorie', wonach einem Täter, der irgendeine Bedingung gesetzt hat, die zu einer strafbaren Handlung führte, diese Straftat juristisch zugerechnet wird, wofern nur die Bedingung so bedeutend war, dass sie nicht weggedacht werden kann, ohne dass zugleich die strafbare Handlung selbst entfiele. Im Sinne dieser eher theologischen als juristischen Theorie ist Alfredo Traps am Tode seines früheren Chefs, Gygax schuldig.[2'9]

It is bad luck for Traps that he happens to have a car breakdown in that particular village; bad luck that the inns are all full and he is forced to stay at that particular house; as a result, he gets caught up in the inexorable process of this quest for justice based on the old men's

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[2'8] *Die Panne*, p. 15.
[2'9] Hans Mayer, "'Die Panne' von Friedrich Dürrenmatt," in *Zur deutschen Literatur der Zeit* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg Rohwolt), 1967, pp. 215-216.

belief, and dies.

As mentioned previously, Traps would never be tried by society as a criminal because he was operating under society's own rules and principles; these pensioners, outside the main stream of society in their quiet, retired lives, are the only ones who can administer absolute justice to someone like Traps, because they are no longer really part of society and do not follow society's dictates. It has already been noted that Bärlach and Matthäi likewise do not follow the letter of the law but operate above and beyond it, as necessary in order to achieve the justice they aim for which may be hindered by man's rules and regulations. This phenomenon is generally the case in detective novels and it boils down to the ends justifying the means, more or less:

> Die Verbrechen [sind] als das Böse schlechthin eingestuft, so dass auf der Seite des Verfolgers jedes Mittel recht erscheint, wenn es nur dazu dient, das Böse zu beseitigen oder zu vernichten. Kriminalromane kennen kein Problem der Verhältnismässigkeit der Mittel, weil sie von einem Rechtsempfinden ausgehen und die Rechtsposition des Verfolgers und Ordnungshüters absolut setzen.[110]

Of course, Dürrenmatt refutes this idea in his "Requiem auf den Kriminalroman," *Das Versprechen*, where despite all his efforts Inspector Matthäi fails to get the criminal in the end because of various wrong attitudes on his part. But generally the idea above holds true and is appealing to the reader because the neat outcome of the detective novel

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[110] Seifert, *Der Richter und sein Henker*, p. 110.

provides a sense of order and rightness in an unordered, chaotic world.

The results, whether fruitful or fruitless, of various secular beliefs will now be examined. The girl in *Der Hund* believes implicitly in her father and that what he is doing is right, as does Judith in *Es steht geschrieben*; both girls stay with their fathers through good and bad times, no matter what. Their unshakable trust motivates them to stay by their fathers' side. Unfortunately, in both cases their dedication, admirable though it is, is in vain as both the preacher and Knipperdollinck are finally destroyed. However, both situations conform to Dürrenmatt's belief that one must persevere in one's struggle and act as if one might succeed, even though one will probably fail in one's attempts. Thus on the surface the girls' faith was in vain, as it did not save their fathers; but from Dürrenmatt's point of view they contributed immeasurably by virtue of their staunch faith.

It has already been pointed out that Bärlach won his struggle against the evil forces personified by Gastmann and Emmenberger, but it must be noted that it was not his philosophy alone which led him to success; in *Der Richter und sein Henker* his belief included reckoning with chance, so that one could say that in that case his belief did indeed enable him to emerge victorious. But in *Der Verdacht* a deus ex machina was necessary to conquer evil in the end; one man alone, even equipped with the best kind of belief, is not sufficiently powerful.

The effects of belief in *Die Panne* are highly significant and have challenging possibilities, depending on the interpretation one chooses. Dying for a cause or a belief which one embraces is the ultimate avowal to this belief, for by offering up one's life one proclaims that the belief is so valuable that one is willing to give up one's most valuable possession, life, in its name. Is this what Traps is doing, when he executes himself? Has he internalized the values of the old judicial officials so completely that within the space of an evening he is now willing to die for something which, just that afternoon, he had no idea even existed, namely absolute justice? If this is so, then the direct consequence of the pensioners' single-minded, almost religious, belief in justice and the supremacy of the law is, in combination with chance and Traps' emotional make-up and needs, the attainment of justice in the form of Traps' atonement by death in this vacuum totally cut off from society and society's mores.

Mayer reiterates that within the context of society Traps is not considered guilty, is only guilty if measured by the old lawyers' standards: "Schuld des Alfredo Traps? Aber er handelte modellhaft unter den gegebenen Bedingungen und mit den ihm gegebenen Möglichkeiten."[38] In view of this objection, the question of course arises: if Traps would act according to these abstract standards of absolute justice in the business world, would he even be able to survive in a

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[38] Mayer, "Die Panne," p. 217.

society which has long since abandoned these principles? In other words, is it fair to judge him, a member of society, by these standards not used by society? Dürrenmatt claims that it is, and that one should attempt to live by certain high moral principles, although one will probably be mocked by one's fellow man and will probably fail in one's endeavor. The struggle aspect and the perseverance in it is what is noble, not the success or failure of the venture. If Traps has adopted the judiciary officials' belief whole-heartedly, then of course his death would bring great satisfaction to him as it, the consequence of his avowal to a noble belief, brings meaning and true accomplishment for the first time to his life.

Mayer brings up the other possibility, namely that Traps made a terrible mistake, a "Panne", by misinterpreting the game as reality:

> Die Panne tritt ein, als Traps, in künstlerischen Fragen wenig bewandert, die Sphären von Kunst und Wirklichkeit durcheinanderbringt und den Herrenabend verdirbt.[202]

The evidence considered to support this view is doubtless the reaction of the old judiciary officials upon discovering Traps strung up in his bedroom window:

> Der Staatsanwalt [... musste] erst nach Luft schnappen [...], bevor er, ratlos und traurig über seinen verlorenen Freund, recht schmerzlich ausrief: "Alfredo, mein guter Alfredo! Was hast du dir denn um Gotteswillen gedacht? Du verteufelst uns ja den

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[202] H. Mayer, *Dürrenmatt und Frisch. Anmerkungen* (Pfüllingen: Neske, 1965), p. 29.

schönsten Herrenabend."[283]

The tale closes with these words, which lends them significance. However, another possible explanation for these words could be that the aged gentlemen played their game as usual on this particular evening, but for Traps it evolved from game to reality because this is what he wanted and needed to fill his empty life. For the first time, he is in possession of a substantial belief which leads to personal satisfaction and pride for him.[284] Therefore, it appears more likely that Traps has sincerely appropriated this belief in justice.

There are many cases of faith not helping the holder at all, ususally because something is lacking in the tenets of the faith itself. All three idealists in *Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi*, Mississippi with his faith in Moses' law, St. Claude the Communist, and Übelohe-Zabernsee the Christian, fail in their endeavours to convert the world, personified by Anastasia, to their respective faiths because they are too removed from reality and rigid in their thinking: their faiths are ideologies. Stranitzky in *Stranitzky und der Nationalheld* possesses a strong faith in his ability to approach the national hero, form a government with him, and improve the country. However, he is naive, lacking any understanding of human nature and society, thus not recognizing that he is seriously overestimating his

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[283] *Die Panne*, p. 120.

[284] This is a case where Dürrenmatt's conception of the individual being misunderstood by his fellow man, but keeping to his own actions, is evident.

effectiveness. Again, he is not tuned in to reality and this causes his downfall, for he cannot live any longer after reality has corrected his illusions. A similar figure is Arnolph Archilochos in *Grieche sucht Griechin*. He however can and does live after having his eyes opened to what human nature and reality are really like.

Both Archilochos and Stranitzky take positive action, at least, supported by their faiths; the schoolteacher in *Der Besuch der alten Dame* supposedly believes in humanity but does not actually act upon it, only paying it lipservice. When speaking with Ill, after Ill has decided to accept his guilt and atonement, the teacher easily explains away his taking part in Ill's execution for the sake of money despite his great belief in humanity because he is weak: "Mein Glaube an die Humanität ist machtlos."[288] Thus, an intellectual belief is clearly not adequate: the courage to act is necessary to put the belief into action and effect something with it. This is what is lacking in the teacher's belief in humanism, and is often lacking in people's well-meaning humanistic beliefs. In *Das Versprechen*, Matthäi's absolute *Vertrauen* in rationality proves correct, as the murderer was about to be caught just before chance ruined all plans. But what he stubbornly refused to include in his belief was both the element of chance, and man's insignificance and relative powerlessness in the chaotic

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[288] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Besuch der alten Dame* in *Komödien* II (Zürich: Arche, 1955), p. 328.

world. Thus a belief must be rational and realistic to serve man well, and must be used as a basis for affirmative action to prove at all useful.

VI. Positive Values

There are a number of specific values which Dürrenmatt feels man should have *Vertrauen* in. His criticisms of generally well-accepted values have been voiced; now the values this author does recommend are examined. By placing his trust in these guiding principles, namely freedom, morality, justice, humanism and fate, man will survive the modern chaotic world and will even be able to accomplish small things in these seemingly impossible times. The emphasis is on the individual, however; it has been demonstrated how unity among men is totally lacking today. Therefore each individual must operate within his own sphere. Paradoxically, Dürrenmatt claims there are no more value systems for everyone to follow; but if all individuals were to adopt his trust in the above principles, a distinct value system based on these principles would automatically ensue. However, these principles presently not being accepted, the individual does stand alone nowadays in distinguishing himself from the crowd by acting according to these admirable precepts. First, Dürrenmatt's own views and ideas in which he has *Vertrauen* in general will be discussed, as represented by a sampling of characters in the prose works; then the five principles mentioned above will be elucidated.

A. Dürrenmatt's General Beliefs

Now that various characters' beliefs have been discussed in depth in the preceeding chapter, it might prove interesting to see how some of them correspond to Dürrenmatt's own views and ideas in which he has *Vertrauen*. Very generally, Dürrenmatt

> sees life as a mixture of chaos and order, of senselessness and sense. He criticizes his nihilists who rely on the all-powerful force of human reason.[286]

In the prose works the nihilists referred to are, of course, the young man in *Die Falle*, who is waiting for chance to fulfill his supposed wish for death; Gastmann; and Emmenberger. The idealists are, for instance, Arnolph Archilochos and Inspector Matthäi. Of course, Dürrenmatt condones neither belief if too strictly adhered to, as they are too extreme, rigid and one-sided. An inkling of Dürrenmatt's thought is visible in the philosophies of Drs. Emmenberger and Marlok. These two:

> denken und handeln völlig konsequent--mit entsetzlichen Resultaten. Dürrenmatt lehnt ihre Taten ab, aber er respektiert die Philosophie, welche die Taten motiviert. Bärlach hat--wie Dürrenmatt--dieser Philosophie nichts entgegenzuwenden, keinen Glauben; es bleibt ihm ehrlicherweise nur das Schweigen. Oder er kann--mit dem Juden--schreien: 'Es lebe der Mensch!' und hinzufügen: 'Aber wie.'[287]

As mentioned before, the position of the nihilists is "eine Variante einer negativen Möglichkeit von Bärlachs

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[286] Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 422.
[287] Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 55.

Weltanschauung"[288] , so that Bärlach cannot defend his positive faith without any overwhelming counter-argument. Dürrenmatt has even expressly correlated his own personal beliefs with those of Emmenberger's in the commentary to a version of *Der Verdacht* printed in the *Beobachter* newspaper:

> Deine Gedanken sind auch die meinen. Der gleiche Abgrund ist in mir und dir. Mein Bruder auch du?[289]

However, the figure in the prose works who most closely serves as the author's spokesman as far as secular beliefs go is, of course, Police Inspector Bärlach. Dürrenmatt is suspicious of institutions and modern technology, and strongly advocates the individual attempting to accomplish as much as he can. These beliefs are reflected in Bärlach's character: he is

> Von altem Schrot und Korn, ist in erster Linie ein konservativer Mensch, der nicht nach juristischen Regeln operiert, der von den modernen Techniken der Kriminologie wenig hält und lieber seiner durch Erfahrung gewitzten Nase und dem gesunden Menschenverstand folgt.[290]

Obviously, Dürrenmatt possesses a good understanding of human nature, judging from the portraits and actions of characters in his works, and

> in Kommissar Bärlach gestaltet Dürrenmatt einen Menschen, der sich über die Relativierbarkeit des menschlichen Planens gemessen an der Realität klar ist.[291]

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[288] Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 192.
[289] Cit. in Spycher, Ibid., p. 194.
[290] Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 89.
[291] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren bei Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (Bielefeld: Pfeffersche Buchhandlung, 1974), p. 25.

It has gradually become apparent that Dürrenmatt has a clear conception of, and feeling for, morality, whose foundation is based on the religious upbringing he had. He himself claims he has too many doubts to believe in God, but he undeniably still places strong emphasis on certain originally religious principles. As with the author, "der Instinkt für Gerechtigkeit scheint aber tiefer zu sitzen, obwohl der Kommissar nicht an Gott oder an ein ewiges Leben glaubt."[292] Dürrenmatt purposely does not adhere strictly to the usual form of the detective novel: for the figure of Bärlach, what is of prime importance is "die Überführung, vor allem die Bestrafung des Täters und die Sühnung der Tat."[293] The mystery of who committed the crime is no longer the most important aspect of ostensible a detective novel; the goal of trapping and punishing the criminal, a very upright Christian thought, is what is important. This indicates a highly moral belief on the part of the author, visible of course also in the fictitious characters he creates, in this case especially in Bärlach.

B. Specific Values

Freedom

The first most basic concept mentioned above, most basic because it determines the very possibility or lack of it for action on every person's part, is freedom. Dürrenmatt

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[292] Arnold, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 50.
[293] Ibid.

defines the idea as follows: "Das Recht des Einzelnen besteht darin, sich selbst zu sein: Dieses Recht nennen wir Freiheit."[294] Dürrenmatt believes that man always possesses the freedom of decision as to what course of action he can take. This is a very significant point:

> Die Freiheit wird nicht durch die Politik realisiert, nicht durch Revolution erzielt, sie ist als Grundbedingung des Menschen immer vorhanden, und wäre der Mensch in Ketten geboren.[295]

This quote from Dürrenmatt's theoretical writings reveals much about his idea of freedom. Man does theoretically possess freedom to act whatever way he chooses, but other factors play an important, often decisive role, e.g., the chaotic world, fate, etc. in determining how man can express and utilize his freedom. If he is indeed free to make choices of action, then man is totally responsible for his actions; this is a key point often debated.

In the later work *Frank der Fünfte* one character repeats the realization several times that they could always have turned back at any point, instead of getting involved deeper and deeper in the criminal activities of the bank. However, this view ignores the fact that all employees were perpetually intimidated and living in fear of discovery or retribution. This is what Dürrenmatt means when he says everyone possesses freedom theoretically. But there are

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[294] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Monstervortrag über Gerechtigkeit und Recht* (Zürich: Arche, 1969), p. 41.
[295] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Mannheimer Schiller-Rede," *Akzente*, 7, No. 1, 23.

always inhibiting factors in reality which limit the expression of one's freedom. Dürrenmatt is warning his readers, alerting them to and trying to rouse them from these limiting factors, such as excessive materialistic comfort, which tempt one not to utilize one's freedom, just as the Babylonians and Gülleners do not.

An opposite extreme is someone who carries the freedom every person has to its ultimate degree, which then becomes unacceptable and harmful to society. Gastmann is such a person: "Gastmann represents a nihilistic freedom not at all related to a scale of good and evil."[216] Of course Emmenberger goes even further in exercising his freedom to the utmost limit, enjoying precisely the effects of his taking the fullest advantage of his personal freedom, namely the impingement on the freedom of others.

This leads to the fundamental principle that if man lives together with other men, his freedom must necessarily be curtailed to a certain extent:

> Zwei Möglichkeiten ergeben sich aus dem Begriff Mensch, aus dem Individuum und aus dem Menschen als Teil der Gesellschaft. Das Individuum sieht sein Recht darin, sich selbst zu sein. Das Recht der Gesellschaft ist, die Freiheit des Einzelnen zu garantieren, indem sie sie beschränkt. Dieses Recht ist die Gerechtigkeit.[217]

This explains exactly the reason why Bärlach must stop Gastmann and Emmenberger: not merely because they are criminals, but more importantly because they are exercising

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[216] Timo Tisanen, *A Study in Plays*, p. 132.
[217] E. Brock-Sulzer, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Stationen seines Werkes* (Zürich: Arche, 1973), p. 312.

absolute freedom which is devastating to other individuals, to society as a whole, because society can ill afford to tolerate such a disruptive factor within it. Regarding absolute freedom, Dürrenmatt calls "die Welt der absoluten Freiheit einen Dschungel, wo der Mensch wie ein Wild gejagt."[298]

Thus man does possess freedom, but it is limited because of society; as a result, "die Freiheit des Geistes ist die noch mögliche Freiheit, die dem Menschen bleibt."[299] And this freedom of the intellect is exactly what one must utilize to the fullest. With one's intellect and common sense, one can survive the effects of all the unpredictable forces which increasingly tend to control man. Dürrenmatt's idea of man's lack of control, i.e., lack of freedom, can be defined as follows:

> Das menschliche Verhalten wird nach Dürrenmatts Überzeugung nicht so sehr durch die Freiheit des Menschen zur Entscheidung, vielmehr durch rational nicht fassbare Grössen gesteuert. Sie wirken durch den Menschen hindurch und beeinflussen-ihm selbst gar nicht bewusst--seine Handlung in entscheidendem Masse [...]. Die Auffassung des Autors vom Menschen, dessen Freiheit nur noch eine scheinbare Freiheit ist und dessen Handlungen durch zahlreiche Faktoren vorbestimmt sind, [wird] deutlich.[300]

This view as described by Gutmann does not contradict a previous critic's evaluation of Dürrenmatt's attitude towards freedom, where it was stated that every man does

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[298] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 42.
[299] Ibid., p. 110.
[300] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren bei Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (Bielefeld: Pfeffersche Buchhandlung, 1974), p. 37.

have the freedom to choose his actions. It means that the attitude must be redefined: the actual freedom of choice which man has is very limited indeed, Dürrenmatt believes, because of the nature of the modern world. What man does with the limited freedom he has, despite the limitations imposed on it, is the important aspect.

Those who take up the challenge of accepting the limited freedom they have and trying to regulate their actions for the best to the best of their ability within this realm are those who courageously accept the responsibility for their lives. For as soon as one accepts the freedom allotted to every man, one shoulders the responsibility that goes with it. However, many people are unhappy about this state of affairs:

> Die Erkenntnis, frei zu sein, offenbart sich jedoch nicht als Beglückung, sondern oft als Not, Auswegslosigkeit und Angst.[30]

For these people, their excuse is that everyone else is doing the same thing, i.e., shirking their moral responsibility and clinging to anti-humanistic beliefs; therefore they will continue simply following the crowd. Such people make themselves unfree. A frightening picture of such unfree people are the actors in *Der Theaterdirektor*, who are in the grasp of the theater director's power: "Wichtig ist [...], dass Dürrenmatt diesem 'Teufelstheater' einen marionettenhaften Character andichtet, etwas rein

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[30] Ibid., p. 11.

Mechanisches, das die Freiheit des Menschen aufhebt."[302]

Pilatus is another story portraying an unfree man. The Existentialist idea of freedom defines it as being the opportunity to act as one wishes. Pilate does not trust the God standing before him, and fears him because he is an unknown. He fears that the God wants to involve him in his cruel game or plan of subjugating him. Thus

> Pilatus handelt unfrei, denn er handelt in Angst. Die Angst, die Kierkegaard einerseits als Möglichkeit der Freiheit versteht, insofern sie den Glauben aus sich entlässt und kraft dieses Glaubens bildend wirkt, ist andererseits lähmende Angst--[...] wenn sie Angst vor dem Inhalt ist. Das ist sie bei Pilatus.[303]

This process of fear initiating a loss of freedom occurs as follows: lack of *Vertrauen* is inspired, which leads to insecurity (in its extreme form, fear,) which affects action, constituting a loss of freedom. This condition of inhibited action because of fear has long been recognized and explored by psychologists of the Self-Actualization school and philosophers of the Existentialist school of thought alike. The same situation is portrayed in the opera *Frank der Fünfte*. As soon as the characters make their choice to become part of the Frank Bank, they forfeit their freedom because, from then on, all their actions are determined by fear: "Alles, was wir tun, tun wir aus Furcht. Aus Furcht vor einer Entdeckung, aus Furcht vor dem

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[302] E. Brock-Sulzer, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 327.
[303] Joachim Bark, "Dürrenmatts 'Pilatus' und das Etikett des christlichen Dichters," in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, Gerhard P. Knapp, (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 63.

Gefängnis,"[302] is the head clerk Böckmann's lament. Of course, the most vivid portrait of man operating out of fear is *Der Sturz*, in which paranoia is the prevailing element. The theme of the story is that no-one has *Vertrauen* in anyone else, with the result that all characters fear one another and act in accordance with their fear. This determines the entire plot of the tale. Thus fear, lack of freedom in action, is the motivation behind the chain of events. If the characters could only overcome their fear, admittedly difficult in their dangerous situation, and have *Vertrauen* in their freedom of action instead, they would accomplish much more which would be beneficial to themselves.

Morality

A second value in which one should place one's *Vertrauen*, morality, constitutes a most important subject in Dürrenmatt's writings. This is because Dürrenmatt is "a moralist reared in the Protestant tradition which must be revised and made to apply to the modern world."[303] This is why Dürrenmatt wrestles with the problem of morality throughout his works. Other critics have also noted Dürrenmatt's intense involvement with the question of morality:

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[302] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Frank der Fünfte* (Zürich: Arche, 1960), p. 39.
[303] Kurt J. Fickert, *To Heaven and Back. The New Morality in the Plays of Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, Diss. University of Kentucky 1972, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), p. 37.

> Nur soviel lässt sich mit Gewissheit sagen, der Verfasser [...] ist radikaler Ethiker. Sein Gewissen steht an unbestechlicher Strenge der Welt und sich selber gegenüber den Moralisten der literarichen Tradition nicht nach.[306]

Syberberg, for instance, is convinced "dass die Problematik Dürrenmatts letztlich ethischer Art ist."[307] The question of morality is present in Dürrenmatt's works from the very beginning, with the characters either acting in accordance with the author's ideas on morality, or conspicuous in their lack of the proper mores.

Dürrenmatt's concept of morality develops gradually until it appears to be based on two fundamental principles: firstly, given the amount of freedom man possesses, he is obliged to utilize that freedom by making responsible choices every chance he has and sticking by them, even under the circumstances of everyone else evading his responsibility and taking the path of least effort. Bärlach is a figure demonstrating this tenet being followed, as are Ill and Traps, following a certain development on their part. This same principle is the main theme of the opera *Frank der Fünfte*:

> Dürrenmatt contends that the moral freedom of the individual is his basic concern in this play [...]. The unimpeded exercise of the right to choose is a basic tenet of the ethical system of the new morality [...]. The enslavement into which all the characters in *Frank der Fünfte* have fallen results from adherance to standards of conduct, moral guidelines, inherited from father to son.[308]

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[306] Hans J. Syberberg, *Interpretationen zum Drama Friedrich Dürrenmatts* (München: UNI-Druck, 1965), p. 128.
[307] Ibid., p. 130.
[308] Kurt J. Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, p. 45.

These people do not make their own responsible decisions; they merely follow old (and morally wrong) guidelines for their actions.

This is a recurring factor in Dürrenmatt's works which increases the difficulty for an individual trying to make a morally responsible decision: if his fellow man participates as a collective body in behaving immorally, it is an added obstacle to have to differentiate oneself from the crowd and act totally alone. However, "only the individual by himself can act effectively in attaining moral goals for mankind."[309] This situation occurs repeatedly in Dürrenmatt's work, for instance Bärlach pursuing the criminal Emmenberger whom the state has long accepted in its midst; the student in *Der Tunnel* being the lone train passenger who recognizes that *Vertrauen* in God means salvation; Alfredo Traps finally lifting himself above the mediocre middle-class masses of which he was an integral part, and dedicating his life to the high ideal of justice. Many similar examples are to be found also in the plays.

The second fundamental precept of Dürrenmatt's morality consists of the idea of responsibility, even love, towards one's fellow man. This thesis has already pointed out Dürrenmatt's alarm concerning the impersonal modern world, loaded down with values, revered by most of the population, celebrating material things rather than human beings. To counter this, Dürrenmatt advocates humanism as the type of

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[309] Ibid., p. 60.

morality everyone should adopt: namely concern for one's fellow man. Again, the characters in his works either display this kind of morality or totally lack it, in which case the people around them suffer as a result.

Bärlach, revering all life and tirelessly opposing all those who denigrate the value of life such as the nihilists Gastmann and Emmenberger, defiantly persists in espousing this kind of humanistic morality. Arnolph Archilochos' moral hierarchy appears to be an impressive array of representatives of his strict morality, but "this odd assembly of moral heroes is meant to be both amusing and to illustrate the confusion that exists in Arnolph's unawakened mind."[310] His morality is not good for himself: he is blind to reality because of his rigid, idealistic code of ethics. He learns a lesson from the President of the fictitious country, who teaches Arnold that an accepting kind of love is the best possible kind of attitude to have:

> This kind of love, charity towards all men, constitutes the only basis for a code of morality. Good comes solely from the exercise of love, the selfless act which allows one human being to accept another (or all others) as he is without reference to preconceived notions of how he ought to be.[311]

With such an attitude, Arnolph is able to discard his contrived moral hierarchy, which of course rejects people like Chloé immediately on account of her previous occupation, and can accept his sweetheart as she is. He

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[310] Murray Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 115.
[311] Kurt J. Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, p. 30.

changes his blind love into a tolerant, accepting love. This attitude towards love exists parallel with Dürrenmatt's attitude towards the modern world and how man should consequently act, namely that he must accept certain conditions like his inferiority vis à vis factors like fate and chance, and that he must stay with his endeavours, not giving up. His efforts may appear superficially futile, but a personal victory within defeat is possible and all that can be hoped for.

If God is either malevolent or totally uninvolved in man's affairs, then the only option left is that men turn to one another, and love and accept each other in the spirit of co-operation. Traps finally recognizes that he has violated this supreme law, namely the value of life--in this case human life--and is penitant enough to atone for his action with his life.

Möbius is one character who stands out as someone truly motivated by his humanistic morality. His ethics do not stem from a belief in God or adherance to organized religion, but are a result of him choosing to utilize the freedom he does possess and act responsibly by trying to save mankind from destruction. His case illustrates what Dürrenmatt is recommending as far as trust in principles is concerned: he realizes that faith in a religion cannot be simply decided on; either one has it or one does not. Religious faith cannot be chosen rationally with the goal of overcoming the irrationality of the world. However, what one can choose is

to utilize all the opportunities which present themselves to oneself, in other words to make the most of one's freedom. This course of action can be chosen and acted upon, as Möbius attempts to do.

However, Möbius with his seemingly perfect humanistic and moral motives makes a fatal mistake, which is applying "his concept of logic to the moral sphere."[3'3] This is exactly the same mistake causing Matthäi's downfall: ignoring the element of chance. In addition, Möbius overestimates the power of the individual, like Stranitzky; he believes that he as one man will be capable of saving the world. As Bärlach learned in *Der Verdacht*, so Möbius is taught by drastic means that though his goal was admirable, his methods were wrong: paradoxically, by withdrawing from the world, he is withdrawing from his responsibility. Issues can be dealt with only if they are confronted, not if they are tucked away somewhere. Dürrenmatt is urging exactly this: that one accept the responsibility of facing and dealing with problems rather than attempting to ignore them. He accuses the society, which he portrays in different guises but all fundamentally the same in his different works, of consistently evading its reponsibilities by ignoring them. *Vertrauen* in something, such as humanistic values, is important to give strength to confront problems facing society which must be dealt with. The relationship between morality and science is a very timely topic in this

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[3'3] Kurt J. Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, p. 51.

age of dangerous and ethically often questionable research: will the research ultimately serve the state and financial gain, or will it serve mankind's best interests?

There are few characters in Dürrenmatt's works who display the ideas that he holds concerning morality; most of them are negative examples of what he advocates, and there are countless numbers of such characters. Paradoxically, those seemingly demonstrating impeccably strict morals often act most immorally, i.e., anti-humanistically. For example, Mississippi and Archilochos are both apparently models of virtue, but their mores are exposed as being false:

> Florestan Mississippi espouses a moral code which conflicts directly and dramatically with that of Übelohe and the author. The marriage of Mr. Mississippi is intended by the bridegroom to be a triumph of the strictest morality. Paradoxically, Mississippi's morality has already been undermined by the love between his fiancée and Übelohe. Mississippi's shaky set of values is, nevertheless, based on the most well-founded and clear-cut of all codes of morality, the Mosaic law.[313]

This is very similar to the later situation of Archilochos: he also has a clear-cut system of morality, also undermined, unknown to him, by reality; his pure love for Chloé is undermined by the fact that she is in reality far from being the chaste girl he imagines her to be. The problem with these artificial codes of morality is as follows:

> The attempt to live by preestablished standards is grotesque, for the root of morality lies in the individual, in his volition, the will to act out of love.[314]

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[313] Kurt J. Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, p. 27.
[314] Timo Tiusanen, *A Study in Plays* , p. 235.

Dürrenmatt has portrayed humanists in his works, for example the school teacher in *Der Besuch der alten Dame*, but it is a "critical picture of German or Swiss intellectuals, rather of the old school, admirers of Greek classics, weak in their humanism."[315] The school teacher does protest the Gülleners' treatment of Ill, but he accomplishes nothing, preferring to seek solace in alcohol. It has been mentioned previously how the entire opera *Frank der Fünfte* is a portrayal of man's immorality in business, as *Der Besuch der alten Dame* also was. The former work depicts modern society's moral atmosphere:

> In Herbert's brutal honesty and cold amoral efficiency, Dürrenmatt passes judgement on contemporary Western society which, he feels, is already highly impersonal and abstract. [...] The author effectively uses the metaphor of an ice age to communicate his feelings about a world dominated and ruled by numbers: honesty is cold, necessity is as hard as stone, a glacier has so numbed man morally that he lives in a state of apathetic indifference, where justice is no longer possible.[316]

At the end of the radio play *Die Panne*, different from the prose version, Traps merely remembers the whole episode as a dream, and drives away to continue on in his life in the same manner:

> Die dadurch zum Ausdruck gebrachte Gleichgültigkeit des Menschen, selbst da, wo er einmal seine Schuld einsah, wirkt aber wohl noch unheimlicher als der

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[315] Ibid.

[316] Robert E. Holzapfel, *Three Facets of Dürrenmatt's Drama: The Way of the Individual to God--The Way of the Individual in the World--The World as Chaos*, Diss. University of Iowa 1965, p. 165.

Ausgang der Prosafassung.[317]

Thus Dürrenmatt portrays man's lack of morality throughout his works, beginning with the early prose works where he is concerned not only with his own private self and personal values, but with a more general morality:

> In diesen Erzählungen gibt es also nicht nur den Sog der Vernichtung, sondern auch das Umkreisen einer transzendentalen Wahrheit, ja, einen festen moralischen und religiösen Standpunkt. Walter Muschg bezeichnet Dürrenmatts Kampf zutreffend als 'religiöse Auseinandersetzung mit der Gegenwart,' nicht nur mit sich selbst.[318]

His personal concept of morality, which he developed from this, is one of the acceptance of personal responsibility as far as one's freedom to act goes, and as far as one's fellow man is concerned.

Justice.

The topic of justice, both divine and earthly, is another all-pervasive theme running throughout the whole of Dürrenmatt's works. For this reason, only an overview is possible here, although it constitutes a major theme and is relevant for the topic of *Vertrauen*, being another value which one should strive for, according to Dürrenmatt, within the limitations imposed by human nature and the modern chaotic world. Firstly, Dürrenmatt's concept of justice must be defined: does he believe in divine or human justice, or both? When he discusses justice in his theoretical writings, it is never in connection with God; he even categorically

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[317] Chr. Jauslin, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Zur Struktur seiner Dramen* (Zürich: Juris Verlag, 1972), p. 12.
[318] Peter Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 36.

expresses his opinion: "Die Gerechtigkeit ist eine Idee, die eine Gesellschaft von Menschen voraussetzt."[319] This fact, together with the various portraits of God's injustice to man in Dürrenmatt's early prose works prove conclusively that to Dürrenmatt, justice is more a human affair than a divine one.

However, at the same time, Dürrenmatt repeatedly demonstrates how justice is beyond the grasp of man, how it appears to be linked to chance so that those figures who strive for it the hardest may not attain it, and those not seeking it are suddenly confronted by it. Justice is portrayed by Dürrenmatt in a multi-faceted manner. The complicated and confused plot of *Die Ehe des Herrn Mississippi* symbolizes the theme of the play:

> that the search for truth and justice seems impossible, and at the same time it demonstrates the confusion which results from any and all attempts to establish justice in this world.[320]

Many figures seeking justice such as Romulus, Bärlach, Archilochos, Matthäi , etc. demonstrate consistently how elusive the attainment of justice is:

> Dass Dürrenmatts Narren an der Verwirklichung der Gerechtigkeit scheitern, selbst schuldig werden und unversehens von der Rolle des Richters in die des Gerichteten fallen, erinnert in der Konstellation an den Umschlag des Spieles in Ernst.[321]

Perhaps one reason for man's being unable to effect justice whenever he is seeking it is because he is an imperfect

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[319] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht*, p. 37.
[320] Murray Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 45.
[321] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren* , p. 73.

being, and justice an absolute value. Or perhaps the fault lies with the modern, unordered world, product of man, where an absolute standard like justice is scarcely possible any more. Whatever the reason, man can no longer place his *Vertrauen* in the automatic reliable attainment of justice, because it no longer happens that way.

There is a curious juxtaposition of old-fashioned, straight-laced justice and the chance kind of modern times in Dürrenmatt's works: this is most clearly seen in *Der Besuch der alten Dame* with Claire pitted against the Gülleners, and in *Die Panne*, with the old judiciary officials lined up against Traps as representative of his society. The purpose of these configurations is to portray justice as an absolute value, an independent entity almost, separate from and above human existence. This being so, of course man's laws will be totally inadequate in providing him with the means of reaching his goal of justice. For under man's modern legal systems, individuals such as Ill, Gastmann, Emmenberger and Traps would never be brought to justice; modern laws tolerate such transgressors since they espouse the mores of the society which determines its own laws. Also, "the law is excellent for regulating traffic, we are once told by this ironic Berner [...], but it cannot necessarily eliminate the evil within us."[322] Exactly how powerful the evil within us is has already been previously

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[322] Geoffry Wagner, "Dürrenmatt and the Kriminalroman," *Commonweal*, 76, 1962), p. 325.

examined.

Thus, quite obviously, Dürrenmatt has little *Vertrauen* in man's flawed system of justice. This is further underscored by the fact that when justice **does** take place, it is usually outside the law, in Dürrenmatt's works. Bärlach acts completely on his own in implementing Tschanz as his instrument of justice against Gastmann; his mistrust of the police institution with its modern methods is quite evident. Bärlach is retired from active service in *Der Verdacht* but pursues the Nazi physician privately. This criminal is dispatched in the end by Gulliver the Jew, a former victim of the doctor. He expressly wishes to make Emmenberger's death look like suicide,

> weil er glaubte, der ganze Fall Emmenberger sei nicht eine Sache der staatlichen Behörden und der Öffentlichkeit, sondern eine Sache der verborgenen höheren und höchsten Gerechtigkeit.[323]

The figure who metes out justice here, Gulliver, saving Bärlach from destruction and executing the criminal, is described by Spycher as "ein Riese, der sicher ist, in Gottes Auftrag zu handeln."[324]

Dürrenmatt has a specific purpose in mind when demonstrating, with his detective novels' supra-legal justice, that our *Vertrauen* in man's ability to attain justice is unwarranted:

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[323] Peter Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 195.
[324] Ibid., p. 196.

> The genre [of the detective novel] perpetrates the illusion that the agencies devised to protect society are omnipotent in their capacity to control criminality. All of Dürrenmatt's works, and particularly his three detective novels, directly or indirectly refute the implication that the legally constituted bodies have either the capacity or often even the inclination to confront the evil which exists in society and to effect justice.[325]

Quite simply, it is no longer possible to have general justice; only the individual can seek and perhaps attain it:

> Gerechtigkeit ist also noch möglich, aber nur [...] als zufällige, rätselhafte, persönliche Leistung, als moralischer *salto mortale* trotz aller moralischer Determiniertheit der modernen Welt.[326]

But Bärlach himself, exemplifying what modern man should undertake, expresses the enduring importance of justice even today: "'Die Gerechtigkeit hat immer Sinn,' beharrte Bärlach auf seinem Unternehmen."[327]

A topic closely connected with justice, because it is one of the products of justice, is guilt, which deserves brief mention here. Its occurrence is most obvious in the tale *Die Panne*. Gastmann and Emmenberger feel no pangs of guilt whatsoever, being incorrigible nihilists who do not atone for their sins, even with their deaths. But Traps is one who, having been convinced of his guilt, chooses punishment and atonement. It must be borne in mind that these cases and trials all take place outside the law, with the result that it is truly up to the individual to accept

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[325] R. W. Beckmeier, *Dürrenmatt and the Detective Novel: Commitment and Responsibility*, Diss. New York University 1973, pp. 24-25.
[326] Hans Ternes, "Das Problem der Gerechtigkeit in Dürrenmatts *Die Panne*," *Germanic Notes*, 6, (1975), p. 3.
[327] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Der Verdacht*, p. 64.

his guilt or not; he is free to choose, unbound by any man-made laws: "Ihn [d.h., Dürrenmatt] beschäftigt, ob ein Schuldiger seine Schuld auch einsehen könne, wenn ihn kein Gericht schuldig erklärt."[328] The important point is whether or not the protagonist has internalized the values judging him as guilty, i.e., justice, so that he is not forced into atonement but chooses it of his own free will. If he chooses it freely, this clearly indicates that he has full *Vertrauen* in the value of justice. This situation occurs in both *Der Besuch der alten Dame* and *Die Panne*: "Nun entspricht es [...] der christlichen Überzeugung, dass man Recht und Gerechtigkeit nicht als äussere Instanz erlebe, sondern ihrer innewerde."[329]

It has been mentioned previously that although these guilty characters are individuals, they are simultaneously products and representatives of their society, so that all of society is literally on trial and found guilty: "What interests Dürrenmatt [...] is not the guilt of a particular individual who commits a crime for whatever motive, but the universal implications of individual guilt."[330] But at the same time as the phenomenon of collective guilt is being explored, "Dürrenmatt teaches personal responsibility to a world which admits only to collective guilt and collective

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[328] Hans Bänzinger, "Die Gerichte und das Gericht von Alfredo Traps in einer ländlichen Villa," in *Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Gerhard P. Knapp (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1976), p. 220.
[329] Hans Bänzinger, "Die Gerichte und das Gericht," p. 222.
[330] R. W. Beckmeier, *Dürrenmatt and the Detective Novel*, p. 27.

obligation."[331] And he does this, for instance in *Die Panne*, by example of

> das erzieherische Bestreben [der Greise], dem Angeklagten zur Einsicht in seine Schuld und zum Wunsch nach Sühne zu verhelfen und damit zur Erkenntnis seiner Menschenwürde, die darauf beruht, dass er nicht gedankenlos in einer 'Welt der Pannen' herumwurstelt, sondern sich in eigener Verantwortung zur Schuld und zur Sühne fähig weiss, das heisst zu einer ihn adelnden Gerechtigkeit.[332]

For there are distinctly positive consequences to admitting and accepting one's own guilt, if one has transgressed morally: quite simply, one has accepted a certain system of values by which one is considered guilty, which immediately brings order and meaning to one's life. For example, Ill, after accepting his personal guilt, "hat seine Freiheit als Individuum zurückgewonnen und so die verlorene Weltordnung in seinem Innern aufs neue aufgerichtet."[333] The same holds true for Traps. Having accepted their guilt and internalized a value system, Dürrenmatt's protagonists are "gelassen, verlieren die Furcht und sehen wieder die Schönheit der Welt."[334] Before, they were able to witness only the chaotic, unordered, immoral world; with their new *Vertrauen* in justice resulting from the acceptance of their guilt, the world has order and meaning and they can enjoy renewed *Vertrauen* in the world.

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[331] Ibid., p. 135.
[332] Peter Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, p. 239.
[333] Herbert Madler, "Dürrenmatts mutiger Mensch," *Hochland*, 62 (1970), p. 48.
[334] Werner Oberle, "Grundsätzliches zum Werk Dürrenmatts," in *Der unbequeme Dürrenmatt*, ed. Willy Jäggi (Basel: Basilius, 1962), p. 20.

What wonderful secondary benefits! This is what Dürrenmatt advises for all people.

Humanism.

A theme which has been ever-present in increasing measure in Dürrenmatt's works is humanism. We have seen that Dürrenmatt was primarily concerned with religion at first, before focussing gradually more and more on man:

> Man kann sich des Eindrucks nicht erwehren, dass Dürrenmatts Anklage an die Zeit über ihren Verlust an Menschlichkeit mit jedem Stück dringlicher wird.[335]

Dürrenmatt sees the potential in man which could be developed: "Seine Kritik am in der endlichen Welt [d.h., Materialismus] verfangenen Individuum Traps ist sinnvoll, weil sie aus dem Wissen kommt, was der Mensch sein könnte und sollte."[336] This, as well as various additional factors, makes him a humanist, advocator of *Vertrauen* in humanism.

He does not concern himself extensively with religion in the later works, but focusses instead solely on the human aspect of life. He refuses to be labelled a nihilist; therefore he must believe in something. He is obviously concerned with man's welfare, judging by the inordinate amounts of social criticism in his works, and he has concluded that the individual can and should be successful in small endeavours. There is far more to be found in his

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[335] Joseph Scherer, "Dürrenmatts mutiger Mensch. Versuch einer Deutung von Friedrich Dürrenmatts Menschenbild," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 169 (1962), 311.
[336] Hans Bänzinger, "Die Gerichte und das Gericht," p. 228.

works "als nur das Gefühl der absoluten Ohnmacht."[337] Therefore, Grimm, who evaluated the author's position as follows: "Friedrich Dürrenmatt, der grosse und grausame Gestalter des Grotesken, ist ein *verkappter Humanist*,"[338] is surely correct in his assessment.

There are countless examples of characters in Dürrenmatt's works who demonstrate the failure of their so-called humanism, or who act, quite simply, inhumanly towards their fellow man. Some examples have already been mentioned in connection with morality, as the two topics are inter-related: morality includes love towards and esteem of one's fellow man, which is precisely what humanism is. Gastmann and Emmenberger are the epitome of inhumanity. And the teacher, with his weak and ineffectual humanism in *Der Besuch der alten Dame* has already been named:

> He is a humanist: 'In the final analysis we do have our occidental principles.' For the sake of the occidental culture [...] the teacher begs the old lady to give up her mission. [...] But the intellect alone, which the teacher symbolizes, cannot cope with the problem of separating good from evil.[339]

Humanism is fine in theory, but one must act upon it in order to achieve anything: the *Vertrauen* one has in it must help one to action. This is succinctly said by the colonists on Venus in *Das Unternehmen der Wega*:

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[337] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 15.
[338] Rheinhold Grimm, "Parodie und Groteske im Werk Dürrenmatts," in *Der unbequeme Dürrenmatt*, p. 96.
[339] Kurt J. Fickert, *To Heaven and Back*, pp. 40-41.

> Bonstetten. Der Mensch ist etwas Kostbares und sein Leben eine Gnade.
> Wood. Lächerlich. Diese Erkenntnis haben wir auf der Erde schon lange.
> Bonstetten. Nun, lebt ihr nach dieser Erkenntnis?
> Schweigen.[340]

Dürrenmatt quite obviously values human life highly, and believes that man could and should improve his interpersonal relationships, partly by valuing human life more, by having *Vertrauen* in humanism.

Fate.

Fate is another phenomenon towards which one should have a certain attitude, namely an accepting one, asserts Dürrenmatt. One should have *Vertrauen* in it, trust that its workings are for the best, for man has no control over it. This is symbolized in Dürrenmatt's works by certain pictures: in *Die Falle*, the descent of mankind on a huge staircase is portrayed, with modern man at the bottom, nearest the fires of hell.

Man's lack of control over his own fate is further demonstrated throughout Dürrenmatt's works by the fact that fate is always inextricably linked to chance: it is pure chance which determines whether a man will confront his fate or not. It was simply chance that Traps' car broke down where it did and that he ended up encountering his final hour as a result of his chance get-together with the old judiciary officials: "Jetzt sind es 'Pannen,' die nivillierte Menschentypen der Zeit mit Schicksal in

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[340] Dürrenmatt, *Das Unternehmen der Wega*, p. 38.

Berührung bringen."[341] The same holds true for one's moment of death; one can no longer choose it and thereby control it to a certain extent, as the tragic heroes of old did, for fate (here: death) is totally out of one's hands:

> Der Henkertod löst den tragischen Tod ab. [...] Doch auch die stilistische Funktion des Todes hat sich gewandelt, denn mit dem tragischen Tod und dem Helden fällt auch die Zielstrebigkeit der Tragödie weg--der Henkertod kann jedem zustossen, er ist nicht Schicksal, sondern Zufall.[342]

Given the nature of fate, there is only one solution for man in order to cope with it, and that is to accept it and be capable of reckoning with it, as Bärlach does, for instance, in *Der Richter und sein Henker*. The student in *Der Tunnel* is the lone person who unreservedly accepts his fate, the same fate as that of the other train passengers; at that moment he recognizes that man is small and powerless, and that other forces--in this particular case, God or fate--are mightier. He surrenders himself totally, embracing his fate. Ill and Traps, very typical representatives of their society, try at first to escape from having to confront and deal with their own peculiar fates, but finally accept them in the end, which is what separates them from and elevates them above their fellow men. In *Der Sturz*, when A realizes that he has lost his position as leader and is about to lose

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[341] Werner Kohlschmidt, "Selbstrechenschaft und Schuldbewusstsein im Menschenbild der Gegenwartsdichtung," in *Das Menschenbild in der Dichtung*, ed. Albert Schaeffer, (München: Beck,1965), p. 190.

[342] Diether Krywalski, "Säkularisiertes Mysterienspiel? Zum Theater Friedrich Dürrenmatts," *Stimmen der Zeit*, 179 (1967), p. 350.

his life, he is very calm, accepting his fate, for the risk that one might lose at the power game is inherent in the game. "An diesem Punkt erreicht er zwar nicht eine äussere, wohl aber seine innere Grösse wieder, eine nihilistische Grösse."[343]

There is a striking positive result to accepting one's fate and giving oneself up to it, namely the

> serenity which may take possession of a person who has completely submitted himself to his destiny and who feels at one with his fate [...]. It is the greatest virtue extolled by Dürrenmatt and the highest achievement of which, according to him, man is capable [...]. The acceptance of fate means an acceptance of one's limitations and of forces that shape our destiny beyond our control or even understanding.[344]

This is visible in countless of Dürrenmatt's characters; to name just a few: the man in *Der Doppelgänger*, Knipperdollinck, Übelohe, Ill, Traps, etc. Although one has no control over the confrontation with one's fate, there is one way of dealing with it: accepting it and not being conquered by it. Camus, in his "Myth of Sysiphus," advises that there is no fate which cannot be overcome by scorn.[345] In other words, by facing up to it and getting involved can one make the best of one's encounter with one's fate. It is not scorn which Dürrenmatt advocates, but *Vertrauen* in and acceptance of fate.

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[343] Peter Spycher, *Das erzählerische Werk*, pp. 364-365.
[344] Murray Peppard, *Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, p. 39.
[345] cit. Hans J. Syberberg, *Interpretationen zum Drama Friedrich Dürrenmatts*, p. 4.

VII. Conclusion

In this study we have seen how fundamental the concept of *Vertrauen* is to Dürrenmatt's works, how it reappears again and again in connection with different themes and values. Dürrenmatt's aim in portraying grotesque scenes rife with black humor, and even occasionally frightening, is to rouse the audience from its subconscious *Vertrauen* in certain values accepted by Western industrialized society. This is Dürrenmatt's version of Brecht's alienation technique. While parodying these views and attitudes, he manages to objectify them in the audience's eyes and bring to light how detrimental man's *Vertrauen* in these modern, materialistic values really is. Just as Ill and Traps are rudely awakened and made conscious of their unconscious immorality, so we need to be; this is what Dürrenmatt is striving to achieve. He reiterates how chaotic the world has become; how our *Vertrauen* in reason and logic, so popular in this scientific age, is misplaced; how man contributes to, even actually causes, his own helplessness today by placing too much *Vertrauen* in technology. What man is doing by relying too much on technology is avoiding responsibility, avoiding taking action himself.

This is one of the most important messages Dürrenmatt is trying to get across: man must shoulder more responsibility instead of trying to evade it. In the prose works, Bärlach is the figure who provides the best model for this. For various reasons such as overpopulation and

excessive technologization, it has unfortunately become easy for man to evade his responsibilities:

> Gone is the fixed scale of moral values against which, say, a Schillerian hero played out his existence, when the extent of his power was visible to all and when he could be held personally responsible for its use.[344]

Because it is easy not to, and due to the chaotic world with chance, the henchman of the absurd, often intervening and making man's endeavours appear worthless, it seems useless to attempt any positive action. But Dürrenmatt insists we must: the very attempt at action is what is most significant and vital. Man must not remain complacent and give in to the unordered world, giving free reign to the forces of evil which are so devastatingly powerful; he must endure the world and keep on fighting for values which do have worth, such as the ones described in the previous chapter.

To be successful, man must be humble, recognizing that there are forces more powerful than himself such as chance, fate, etc. He must beware of having too much *Vertrauen* in his own power, for he is relatively helpless nowadays. It takes courage to endure such a world, and also to differentiate oneself from the crowd and fight for what is right. It is risky to adopt *Vertrauen* in what Dürrenmatt advocates, for if one decides to try and fight for what is good and moral in the world, one will probably fail. The President for example advises Archilochos to adopt love as

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[344] Peter J. Graves, "Disclaimers and Paradoxes in Dürrenmatt," *German Life and Letters*, 27 (1973-4), 136.

his guiding principle, to trust in it and Chloé: "So wandeln Sie denn auf einer schmalen Brücke, über gefährliche Abgründe, wie die Mohammedaner auf einem Schwert, wenn sie in ihr Paradies einziehen."[347]

Even if one does fail, values which appear worthless for the modern world take on new meaning for the man who acts in their name:

> Für diese Gestalten [die doch agieren] gewinnen Werte wie Tapferkeit, Bescheidenheit, Liebe und Demut eine neue vertiefte Bedeutung.[348]

The individual must persist in taking affirmative action, or else the world will soon dissipate in smoke and anarchy. This is the message of all of Dürrenmatt's prose (and dramatic) works. He is a socially oriented writer; he does not portray individuals per se but individuals as part of a society, for he is concerned with mankind as a whole. He offers no definitive answers to all the problems he so graphically portrays, admitting he has none; but he does give some suggestions for basic recommendable attitude changes in man. Man must have *Vertrauen* that there is value and meaning in fighting for the good in this world, and he must persist in it.

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[347] Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Grieche sucht Griechin*, p. 182.
[348] Claudia Gutmann, *Die Gestalt des Narren*, p. 52.

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